The VEDANTA KESARI

॥ नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः ॥

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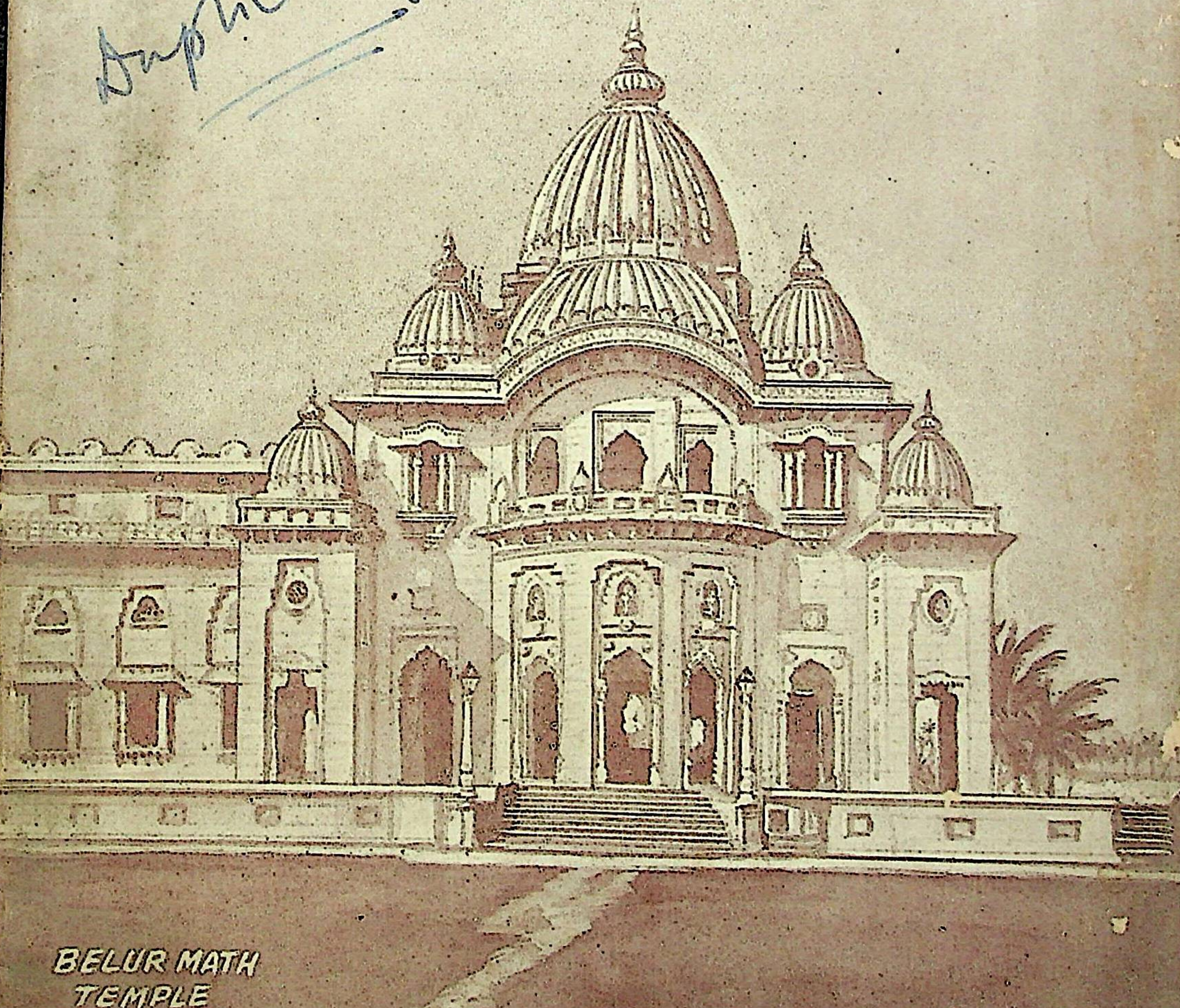

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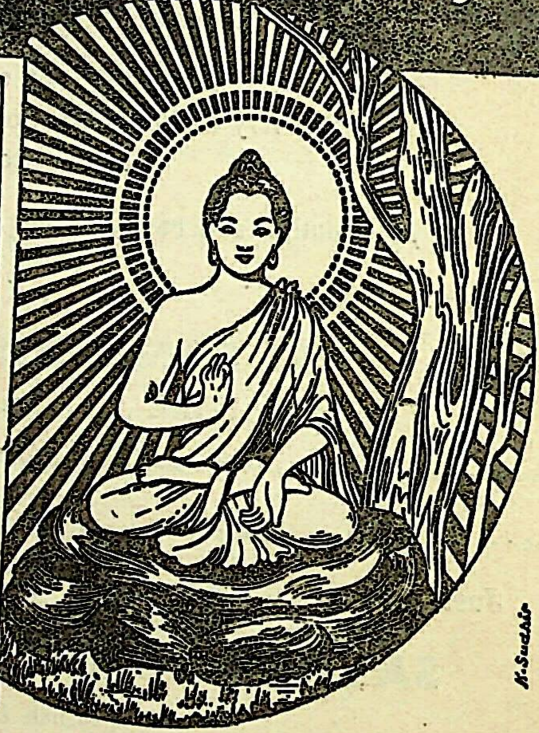

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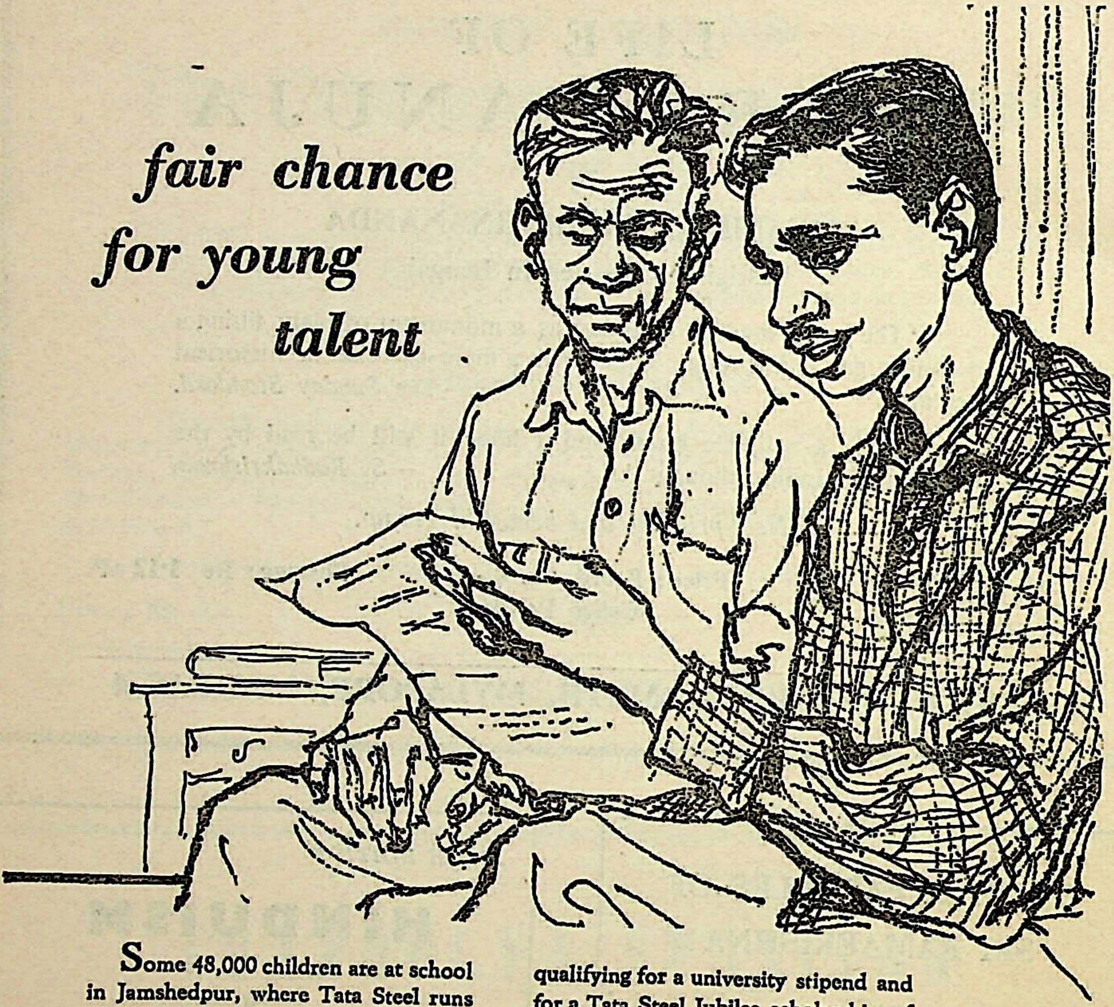

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

Swami Vivekananda

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII **JANUARY 1961** **No. 9**

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Sri Ramakrishna once said that Pandit Gauri of Indes had acquired a miraculous power through his austerities. Whenever he was invited to hold a scriptural controversy, he used to utter loudly a few times the line, 'Whom else shall I, a helpless one, have for refuge but Thee, oh Mother of the pot-bellied Ganesha', preceded by the syllables 'ha, re, re, re'. The Master said: 'The hearts of all got startled with an indescribable fright, when they heard from his mouth those syllables and the line from the hymn to the Devi by Acharya Sankara, uttered in a voice deep and sonorous like the rumbling of clouds. By virtue of that sound the power in Gauri became fully awakened, and he stole away the strength of the adversaries by startling and charming them with it, so that it was then impossible for anyone to defeat Gauri.'

But the Master did not know of that power. As soon as Gauri entered the Dakshineswar temple and uttered loudly, 'ha, re, re, re', some one, as it were, within the Master, pushed him up and made him utter those syllables more loudly than Gauri. Hearing them thus from the mouth of the Master, Gauri uttered them still more loudly. Excited at that, the Master uttered them far more loudly than Gauri. Smilingly the Master used to say, that thus a terrible noise arose, like the din made during inroads by dacoits. The gate-keepers of the Kali-temple came running with sticks and cudgels to the place of the noise. All others were beside themselves with fear. At last Gauri could not utter those words more loudly than the Master and, as if a little dejected, he slowly entered the temple. On knowing that the Master and the newly arrived pandit were raising all that din, all went away roaring with laughter. The Master said: 'Afterwards the Divine Mother told me, that the power which made Gauri unconquerable, was exposed here, and lost to him for ever. Mother attracted that power here (in the Master) for his own good.'

मूर्तमहेश्वरस्तोत्रम् — A HYMN TO VIVEKANANDA

SARAT CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI

मूर्तमहेश्वरमुज्ज्वलभास्करमिष्टममरनरवन्द्यम् ।
वन्दे वेदतनुमुज्झितगर्हितकाञ्चनकामिनीबन्धम् ॥

कोटिभानुकरदीप्तसिंहमहो कटितटकौपीनवन्तम् ।
अभीरभीहुंकारनादितदिङ्मुखप्रचण्डताण्डवनृत्यम् ॥

भुक्तिमुक्तिकृपाकटाक्षप्रेक्षणमघदलविदलनदक्षम् ।
वालचन्द्रधरमिन्दुवन्द्यमिह नौमि गुरुविवेकानन्दम् ॥

To Vivekananda, the Teacher, the Incarnation of Siva, shining like the sun, dear to me, worshipped by gods and by men, the very embodiment of the Vedas, free from the terrible bonds of gold and woman, to Him I bow.

To Vivekananda, the Teacher, Oh! a lion effulgent with the rays of ten million suns, with loin cloth round the waist, roaring 'Be fearless, be fearless' causing the directions to reverberate, dancing the fierce 'Tandava' dance, to Him I bow.

To Vivekananda, the Teacher, whose compassionate glance gives both enjoyment and salvation, expert in shattering heaps of sins, wearer of the baby moon, worshipped by Indu, to Him, here I bow.

मूर्तमहेश्वर - The Incarnation of Siva (Swami Vivekananda), स्तोत्रं - A Hymn in Praise (of)

1. (To Vivekananda, the Teacher) मूर्त-महेश्वर - the incarnation of Siva, उज्ज्वल-भास्करं - shining (like the) sun, इष्टं - dear (to me), अमर-नर-वन्द्यं - worshipped by gods and by men, वेद-तनुं - the very embodiment of the Vedas, उज्झित - free from, गर्हित - the terrible, काञ्चन-कामिनी-वन्वं - bonds of gold and woman, (to Him), वन्दे - I bow.

2. (To Vivekananda, the Teacher) अहो - Oh!, सिंहं - a lion, दीप्त - effulgent (with), कोटि-भानु-कर - the rays of ten million suns, कौपीन वन्तं - with loin cloth, कटितट - (round) the waist, हुंकार - roaring, अभीरभी - "(Be) fearless, (be) fearless", नादित-दिङ्मुख - causing the directions to reverberate, नृत्यं - dancing, प्रचण्ड - the fierce, ताण्डव - "Tandava" (dance), (To Him I bow).

3. गुरु·विवेकानन्दं - To Vivekananda, the Teacher, कृपा-कटाक्ष-प्रेक्षणं - (whose) compassionate glance (gives), भुक्ति-मुक्ति - (both) enjoyment and salvation, अघ-दल - heaps of sins, विदलन-दक्षं - expert in shattering, बाल-चन्द्र-घरं - wearer of the baby moon, इन्दु-वन्द्यं - worshipped by Indu (moon or writer,) इह - here, नौमि - (to Him) I bow.

IDEA OF TAPAS IN THE UPANISHADS

The Sanskrit word *tapas* normally means austerity or penance. Asceticism too refers to the same idea. It has been derived from the root *tap* meaning, to heat. Because of this, one Upanishad identifies it with fire. In the Upanishads the idea of tapas had a variety of development, so much so that some scholars have tried to find out a sort of an evolution of the meanings attached to tapas. What originally meant warmth, then knowledge, next came to mean meditation or concentration of the mind and the senses and finally the action or practice that purifies the mind. And this is perfectly understandable, for to acquire knowledge concentration is essential, which is possible when the mind is purified by a course of righteous conduct. At this stage it became identified with varna and ashrama, the station and stage of life. Thence followed the Gita idea of various types of tapas. Nowadays tapas presupposes contemplation along with isolation, renunciation of desires and pleasures and self-inflicted sufferings and pains.

The idea of tapas, though it underwent a change, is found in all the ancient books including the Rigveda Samhita. The Rigveda (10. 190. 1) says that 'From tapas, kindled to its height, truth and eternal law, satya and rta, were born'. Again it (10. 183) considers tapas as the Germ of everything.

> 'I saw thee meditating in thy spirit what sprang from tapas (ardent devotion) and hath hence developed. In plants and herbs, in all existing beings I have deposited the germ of increase.'

Tapas has been hailed as the ally of Manyu (10. 83), where it stands for fervour or heat of emotion or righteous indignation. It again (10. 154) speaks of persons being 'invincible through tapas'. The Taittiriya Aranyaka also says that the devas triumphed over the asuras by brahmacharya and tapas, self-control and concentration.

The various ideas regarding tapas can be had from the Upanishadic texts. The Chhandogya Upanishad considers tapas as conferring meritorious worlds, but for attaining immortality, it says that one must be firmly established in Brahman.

> 'Three are the branches of religious duty. Sacrifice, study and gifts — these are the first. *Austerity* alone is the second, and the celibate student of sacred knowledge, who lives in the house of the teacher throughout his life mortifying his body in the teacher's house, is the third. All these become possessors of meritorious worlds; but he who is established firmly in Brahman, attains immortality' (2. 23. 1).[1]

Acharya Sankara explains that here 'austerity' stands for Krcchra, Candrayana and other forms of mortification. In 3. 17. 4 the Upanishad considers austerity as one of the largesses[2] of the Purusha sacrifice where the life of a man is looked upon as a yajna.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says (in 1. 2. 6) that by tapas[3] Prajapati created vigour, etc. and (in 1. 5. 1) that he created food with it. This and other Upanishads speak about the creation of the entire world through tapas. The Upanishad is particular to point out that mere austerity, sacrifices and worship are of little use without the knowledge of the Imperishable.

---

[1] तप एव द्वितीयः...एते पुण्यलोका भवन्ति।

[2] अथ यत्तपो दानमार्जवमहिंसा सत्यवचनमिति ता अस्य दक्षिणाः।

[3] स तपोऽतप्यत।

> 'Verily, O Gargi, if one performs sacrifices and worship and undergoes austerity in this world for many thousands of years, but without knowing that Imperishable, limited indeed is that work of his' (3. 8. 10).

Here austerity etc. help the beings 'to conquer the worlds'[4] (6. 2. 16). But it again points out that the Soul is sought by wise people 'by repetition of the Vedas, by sacrifices, by offerings, by penance, by fasting'[5] (4. 4. 22). Another beautiful idea this Upanishad speaks of (in 5. 11. 1) describing as 'supreme austerity' what a sick man suffers before death. Acharya Sankara explains that this suffering should be looked upon with the eye of worship; thereby the sins are destroyed and the fruits of tapasya are obtained. The physical sufferings and fear of death are terrifying and disheartening but much consolation may be derived from this assurance of the scriptures in such dire needs.

The Taittiriya Upanishad too speaks of tapas in different contexts. In 1. 9. 1 it asks us to perform austerity.[6] It also says that according to Taponitya performance of austerity is a duty and that Naka considers study and teaching to be so, for they are the real tapas.[7] The importance of austerity and effort has been well recognized in this Upanishad. In fact, for every goal, spiritual or material, the means set forth is tapas. And in one place Brahman Itself has been identified with it. When Bhrigu repeated his visit to his father Varuna for instruction about Brahman, the latter said, 'Desire to understand Brahman by austerity. Brahman is austerity.'[8] Then by performing austerity Bhrigu came to know of further aspects of truth (3. 2. 1). The commentator points out that till realization of the truth of Tattvamasi is attained, tapas constitutes the repeated thinking of the meanings of the two terms 'Thou' and 'That'. Elsewhere it has been said that the supreme tapas is nothing but 'concentration of the mind and the senses'.[9]

In the Katha Upanishad (2. 15) the supreme goal has been identified with the Pranava, *Aum*, the realization of which all austerities aim at.

> 'The word which all the Vedas rehearse, and which all austerities proclaim, desiring which men live the life of religious studentship, that word to thee I briefly declare. That is Om!'

The Svetasvatara Upanishad too recognizes the importance of austerity for realizing the Atman, for the latter, it says, is rooted in austerity and self-knowledge.

> 'As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as water in river-beds, and as fire in the friction-sticks, so is the Atman apprehended in one's own soul, if one looks for Him with true austerity.'[10]
>
> 'The Soul, which pervades all things as butter is contained in cream, which is rooted in self-knowledge and austerity[11] — this is Brahman, the highest mystic doctrine! This is Brahman, the highest mystic doctrine!' (1. 15-16).

The Mundaka Upanishad declares that Brahman swells for creation by tapas and His tapas consists of knowledge.

> 'By austerity Brahman becomes built up. From that, food is produced; from food —

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[4] अथ ये यज्ञेन दानेन तपसा लोकान् जयन्ति ।

[5] तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसाऽनाशकेन एतमेव विदित्वा मुनिर्भवति ।

[6] तपश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च ।

[7] तप इति तपोनित्यः पौरुशिष्टिः । स्वाध्यायप्रवचने एवेति नाको मौद्गल्यः । तद्धि तपस्तद्धि तपः ।

[8] तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति ।

[9] मनसश्च इन्द्रियाणां च ऐकाग्र्यं परमं तपः ।

[10] सत्येनैनं तपसा योऽनुपश्यति ॥

[11] आत्मविद्या तपोमूलम् ।

> life-breath, mind, truth, the worlds, immortality too in works.
>
> He who is all-knowing, all-wise, *whose austerity consists of knowledge* [12] — from Him are produced the Brahma here, name and form, and food' (1. 1. 8-9).

Moreover, it is from that supreme Being that tapas too originates.

> 'From Him, too, gods are manifoldly produced, as also the celestials, men, cattle, birds, the in-breath and the out-breath, rice and barley, *austerity*, faith, truth, chastity, and the law (2. 1. 7).

In 3. 1. 5 the Upanishad says that by tapas etc. one should try to realize the Self.

> This Soul is obtainable by truth, by austerity, by proper knowledge, by the student's life of chastity constantly practised.[13]

Here the commentator reminds us that it is not so much the physical austerity that is directly useful but the concentration of the mind and the senses. Then by meditation with the purified mind Brahman is realized.

> 'That subtle Soul is to be known by thought wherein the senses fivefoldly have entered. The whole of men's thinking is interwoven with the senses. When that is purified, the Soul shines forth' (3. 1. 9).

In 3. 2. 4 it again says that the Self cannot be realized through tapas or knowledge unless sannyasa (linga)[14] is practised along with it. Acharya Sankara lays much stress on it. Anandagiri explains that complete renunciation is sannyasa and Indra, Janaka, Gargi and others realized the Self because they were free from attachment though they did not have the external paraphernalia of a recluse.

The Prasna Upanishad too extols austerity. When the sages went to Sage Pippalada, he asked them for preparation to practise for one year faith, celibacy and austerity (1. 2)[15]. In 1. 10 it is said that through these an aspirant reaches the Sun in the Northern Path. Those who observe Prajapati-vrata go to the Moon if they are endowed with austerity and chastity (1. 15).

The Mahanarayana Upanishad speaks of tapas as fire; it is practised by strength and it gives rise to faith. In a passage (10. 1) it euologizes various categories as tapas, by repetition of which the enumerated qualities are attained.

> 'Right is austerity. Truth is austerity. Understanding of the scriptures is austerity. Subduing of one's senses is austerity. Restraint of the body through such means like fast is austerity. Cultivation of a peaceable disposition is austerity. Giving gifts without selfish motives is austerity. Worship is austerity. The Supreme Brahman has manifested Himself as Bhuh, Bhuvah and Suvah. Meditate upon Him. This is austerity par excellence.' [16]

It will be seen that they practically include all that is required for a complete moral and spiritual discipline. In another passage (78. 2) it extols religious fast as a great tapas.

> 'Some hold the opinion that austerity is the means of liberation and that there is no austerity higher than religious fast. This excellent austerity is hard to be practised. A person who practises it becomes invincible (or such austerity is unthinkable for the

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[12] यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।

[13] सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।

[14] नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात् ।

[15] भूय एव तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया संवत्सरं संवत्स्यथ ।

[16] ऋतं तपः सत्यं तपः श्रुतं तपः शान्तं तपो दमस्तपः शमस्तपो दानं तपो यज्ञं तपो भूर्भुवः सुवर्ब्रह्मैतदुपास्वैतत्तपः ॥

> commonalty). Therefore seekers of the highest good delight in austerity.' [17]

The commentator, however, points out that this declaration of the superiority of religious fast does not detract from the value of self-control, pilgrimage, japa, oblation and the like, which are also considered as different forms of austerity. In 79. 3 the Upanishad says:

> 'By tapas performed in the beginning gods attained godhood. By tapas seers attained to heaven gradually. By tapas we get rid of our enemies who stand in the way of our acquisitions. Everything is founded in tapas. Therefore they say tapas is the supreme (means of liberation).' [18]

Thus we see that the idea of tapas is well developed in the Upanishads, it having different shades of meaning. This fact shows its richness and emotional appeal to the consciousness of the ancients. It has not lost its charm even now. The lure of austerity draws hundreds of spiritual seekers to the hills and dales, to places of solitude and of pilgrimage. It is because of the deep respect for austerity that thousands of people are attracted to leaders even in other fields who have risen only through great sacrifice. Spiritual attainment, wide sympathy and purposeful austerity are the three elements that have drawn people down the ages to the saints and sages, sadhus and sannyasins, yogis and vairagis and even to other people. True, things of the mundane world too were sought through their probable miraculous powers. But still the fact remains that people are awed at the sight of the complete abandon for or the determined effort to get at the goal, throwing to the winds all considerations of personal gain and even of minimum physical comfort. This austerity is the soul of all one-pointed efforts, essential for growth in different fields. Tapas is therefore sure to retain its hold on man even in modern times.

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[17] तप इति तपो नानशनात्परं यद्धि परं तपस्तद् दुर्धर्षं तद् दुराधर्षं तस्मात्तपसि रमन्ते ।

[18] तपसा देवा देवतामग्र आयन् तपसार्षयः सुवरन्वविन्दन् तपसा सपत्नान्प्रणुदामारातीस्तपसि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितं तस्मात्तपः परमं वदन्ति ।

THE MONKEY CALLED MIND

The Monkey called Mind
Loafs along the streams and jungles,
And swings from branch to branch.
So, what is the use of running after it?

This is the time for us
To seek the timeless state of Love
To obtain the Grace of the Supreme Light
That makes the Cosmic Dance.

The Beyond
Is the cause and ground
Of the one and the many
And the Life of Life.

Hence, O men of the world!
Come and join!

— SAINT TAYUMANAVAR
(Translated from Tamil by R. S. Murti)

MUSINGS ON THE KALPATARU DAY

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

January 1 is a red letter day in the calendar of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna everywhere in the world. This day is so important not because it happens to be the first day of the new year, but because symbolically it came to be the first day of the new life. On this day in 1886 Sri Ramakrishna showered his unbounded grace on lay devotees who had assembled at the Cossipore garden house, where the Master had been lying seriously ill with cancer in his throat. In the afternoon the Master came downstairs unexpectedly and sauntered in the garden towards the assembly of the devotees. And within a few minutes in a singular sweeping act of grace he touched each one of them with the flame of his transmuting power. This flame was ignited for the day by redoubtable Girish. Stopping near him in the garden Sri Ramakrishna had asked, 'Well, Girish, what have you found in me that you proclaim me before all as an incarnation?' At once on his knees, with folded palms raised in adoration, and his voice charged with emotion, Girish replied, 'What can an insignificant creature like me say about one whose glory even sages like Vyasa and Valmiki could not measure?' The depth charge of the intensity of faith with which Girish had uttered these words brought about a volcanic explosion from within the ocean of grace that was Sri Ramakrishna. And he went all out in divine abandon to confer on the devotees greatest blessings of life spiritual irrespective of the consideration of competency. He spoke in these three simple sentences the greatest blessings of the most high: 'What more shall I say! I bless you all. Be illumined!'

These simple words of power set afire the souls of devotees. Forgetting their self-taken promise not to touch his feet while he was ill, they all touched his (savior) feet in salutation. Deeply moved at this manifestation of their devotion Sri Ramakrishna touched every one of them, as a result of which all of them had some instantaneous spiritual experiences.

Sri Ramakrishna himself had said that the wind of God's grace was always blowing. One had only to unfurl the sail. Here there was no need of even unfurling the sail. The wind itself became the unfurled sail too and lapped up the soul in the empirean heights of spiritual experiences. This was a violation of spiritual law, which God incarnate alone could indulge in!

Sri Ramakrishna himself had also said that the mother bird does not break the shell of the egg before the chick was mature enough to be born in the inclemency of the world-weather. But here we find the mother bird becoming aggressive with her compassion and breaking eggs before chicks were ready. If this is not God's soul hunger, what is this?

Now, this violation of law, this aggression of compassion, if it happened only for a day, it would be a dead day of bygone history. But the actions of God incarnate on earth, though they may be actions in history, are indeed accents of the Timeless in the heart of time. Even as actions temporal, they are but the manners of the Eternal.

In the 'Acts of the Apostles' in the *New Testament* there is a significant passage which says:

> 'To whom also he showed himself alive *after his passion* by many infallible proofs...'
>
> (Acts, I. 3.)

The God incarnate on earth even after casting off his corporeal body, stays alive in the 'next room' 'after his passion', i.e. to say in the singular acts which he had performed while alive on earth. If the wound of Christ's body was not even today bleeding in the mystic world-process, how could the mystics receive stigmata even to this day?

Sri Krishna says in the Gita (IV. 9):

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

> Whosoever knows in true light, My Divine birth and action will not be born again when he leaves his body; he will attain Me, O Arjuna.

To know the Lord's divine birth and actions in true light would mean understanding the Lord's real nature as absolute spirit and also his embodiment in maya. Here Sri Krishna gave away a great secret of self-apprehension, which the theistic religions were quick to grasp and profit by. In such religions, therefore, 'leela-smarana' or remembrance of divine acts of God incarnate on earth is considered to be one of the most potent spiritual practices. *Srimad Bhagavatam* (XII. 4. 40) puts it categorically:

संसारसिन्धुमतिदुस्तरमुत्तितीर्षो-
  र्नान्यः प्लवो भगवतः पुरुषोत्तमस्य ।
लीलाकथारसनिषेवणमन्तरेण
  पुंसो भवेद् विविधदुःखदवार्दितस्य ॥

> The jiva or the embodied soul, who is scared by the miseries of the world, if he wants to get across the terrific ocean of transmigratory existence, then the only way open to him is to take recourse to the remembrance of the Lord's divine actions; there is no other raft for crossing this ocean.

The embodied soul can apprehend the *Nitya* or the Eternal, only in his *Leela* or divine sports as an incarnation. Hence *Bhagavatam's* emphasis on 'leela-smarana' or remembrance of the divine deeds. The Song Celestial of the Timeless, has been recorded in the disc of time during the *avatarana* or descent of the Lord on earth. If the aspirant can bring his power of concentration to the pointedness of a gramophone pin, and set it on the disc of 'leela' the eternal music can be heard again. If one can have the gopi-heart Krishna-flute can be heard on the banks of Yamuna even today. On the banks of Kala-kalindi, or time that flows as Yamuna, the eternal one roams about flute in hand.

The only way of apprehending him is the devout observance of the religious calender for 'leela-smarana', remembrance of divine deeds. Even a religion like Buddhism which leans on atheism finds it necessary to observe a thrice-blessed day.

In the calendar of the Ramakrishna tradition January 1 is one of the most significant days, being the day of the lawbreaking aggressive compassion of the Lord. If the devotees of the Lord want this aggression to continue, they must rouse in his heart on this day, the divine 'passion' which devotees did on January 1, 1886. If the calf strikes the udder of the mother-cow with its tender lips, how can milk help flowing again?

For the remembrance of the divine deeds of the Lord we must know as many details of those deeds as possible from all available sources. Our greatest authority in regard to the life of Sri Ramakrishna is Swami Saradananda. His *magnum opus Sri Sri Ramakrishna-leela-prasanga* (translated as *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master*), is a work unexcelled in hagiography in its details, authenticity, rational expositions, interpretative deliberations and illuminating insights.

Such an authority on Sri Ramakrishna's life, Swami Saradananda, did not actually approve of the saying that Sri Ramakrishna had become 'Kalpataru' on January 1, 1886. He convincingly argued:

> 'Some devotees like Ramachandra have described the happening of that day as the Master's turning into wish-fulfilling tree (Kalpataru). But, it is more reasonable, it seems to us, to call it 'the self-revelation of the Master', or the 'bestowal of freedom from fear on all devotees by revealing himself'. The Kalpataru, it is said, gives to all whatever good or bad they ask for. But the Master did not do so; he made clear through that event the fact of his being a God-man and his bestowal of protection against and freedom from fear on all without the slightest discrimination.'[1]

Now, if notwithstanding Swami Saradananda's disapproval, this great day has quietly come to prevail in the Ramakrishna world with the word 'Kalpataru' indelibly inscribed on its forehead—and this has happened without any theological fight—and neither the sannyasins nor the lay devotees appear to be sorry for that, in all humility we can only take this fact, as the will of the Lord. And this will of the Lord may perhaps be understood this way: as it happened, this day was marked out specially for showering grace only on the lay devotees—as Swami Saradananda has written, '....it is a matter of wonder that none of the Sannyasin disciples of the Master was present there that day'—as distinguished from those who were going to become monks. And therefore it would appear that the lay disciple's nomenclature of the great deed has been providentially accepted in preference to the monastic disciple's nomenclature.

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[1] *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1st Edition, p. 896.

'M' the writer of *the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* has not written any account of the day, proving perhaps the fact that he was absent from the scene. Swami Saradananda has quoted in *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* the fragmentary personal accounts or personal reactions of the day as given by such eye witnesses as Ramlal Chattopadhyaya and Vaikunthanath Sannyal. There is also the description of the occasion as given by another eye witness, Akshaykumar Sen, in his famous work *Ramakrishna Punthi*. Akshaykumar also used the word 'Kalpataru'. These narrations of the day are more or less familiar to the readers of the Ramakrishna literature. What have become obscure and not so easily available is the narration of the day as Rama Chandra Dutta saw and understood it. As he was largely responsible in introducing the word 'Kalpataru' his following narration[2] of this day will be found interesting:

'Sri Ramakrishna was brought to the Kasipur garden house for treatment. Here he stayed for eight months. It will take one a yuga to narrate all the leelas he performed in Kasipur...

'When his ailments showed no signs of abatement, some devotees would observe fasts in the name of Taraknath while others supplicated to the Master himself for his own recovery. When nothing proved to be of any avail, one day a few devotees submitted with folded hands,

> "Lord, why are you feigning this illness? We have tried our very best but with no effect on the illness. We have now realized that unless you yourself deign to find the remedy, there is no other way."

'In reply he made various funs. But when the devotees persisted in their request he said,

> "You have not yet been able to understand the cause of the disease. Every action bears its fruit. Good act bears good fruit and bad, bad; one has to reap the fruit according to the act. If you have had to reap the fruits of all your evil deeds and sins, your future will be terrible. But it is God's way to suffer the fruits of action; therefore all the multitude of your sins I have accepted in my hand. On the day you have given me the power of attorney, on that very day you have been freed from your accumulated sins. Unless sins are eradicated and the body is made pure, relationship with God cannot be established. In human body one has to suffer the consequences of sin. And so the disease, in my body. Through this disease in my body you have become freed of sins and whosoever will self-surrender unto me they too will be released. So it is that I am getting through the suffering for their sins too."

'Though we all heard these words, we did not quite realise their significance. It was his another fun, we thought.

'Thiswise Ramakrishnadeva passed his days feigning illness. Physicians of various sorts, sadhus of different types and a multifarious assortment of common people used to visit him. On some days he would saunter about in the garden like one who had no disease at all. On other days from his sore in the throat jar-fulls of blood would come out. And the intriguing part of all this was that when the physician gave a medicine for counteracting a certain symptom, on that day that very symptom would get aggravated. His body could not stand even the Homeopathy medicine, the taking of one grain of which would throw his entire body into convulsion. Hence the physicians would not easily venture to give him medicine.

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[2] Translated from the Bengali work *Ramachandrer Vaktritavali*, pp. 341-47, 1312 Edn.

'As mentioned above, various sorts of people used to come to him and almost everyone would return satisfied with a feeling of blessedness. And it so came about on January 1, 1886 that he became the Kalpataru. On that day at five in the afternoon when seated on one end of the garden we were all engaged in discussing various topics we found him coming towards us. With transfixed gaze we all kept looking at his face. His entire body being covered with cloth no other part of the body was visible but his face. That lustre and unprecedented beauty of his that we witnessed on that day are just beyond delineation. Gradually he drew near us and raising his right hand said, "What more shall I tell you. May spiritual consciousness be awakened in all of you."

'तोमादेर आमि आर कि बलिव ।
आमि वलितेछि ये सकलेर चैतन्य हडक'

So saying he began to place his palm one by one on the chests of devotees, as a result of which everyone became mad as it were. Whomsoever we saw before us that day we caught him and brought before the Lord and he showered his grace on all. We were all stirred to our depths with joy finding that the Lord had become the Kalpataru. Knowing fully well that such a day, so rare to the jivas, will not come again, we began to run hither and thither to seek out persons until none was left. Shouts of victory to Sri Ramakrishna continued to resound in the firmament. Incessant raining of flowers by devotees on the Lord went on and the ocean of *ananda* was in deluge. All this time he was standing in ecstasy. Then coming back to the normal consciousness he returned to his room.

'Afterwards one day he quietly called this servant and asked,

> "Look here, you all say so many things about me. If all that should be true, why then is this miserable state of mine? This sore in the throat, this diseased body—what all these are due to? Gauranga had such beauty, learning, miraculous powers—why do I not have all those powers? Why do I not have such beauty as his and such learning? And can you tell me what is the reason for my leaving Dakshineswar?"

'Hearing such questions of the Master I held his feet and said with folded palms :

> "Lord, you are here again with your waggery! Can this ever be within the capacity of the meanest of your servants to discern the cause of your actions? But if such is your behest, then remembering your feet I say, if you give me strength I must be able to tell the reason. You have made me understand that in gross body the manifestation of *leela* can never be of the same type. Things happen according to the necessity of times. Gaurangadeva acted in the past according to the felt necessities of his times. In this incarnation things cannot proceed in that fashion. Lord, truth to be told, if beauty and miraculous powers were the only means for the salvation of the jivas, we would have long before turned into saints. Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Gauranga, Christ — their unlimited powers, beauty and splendour have all been extolled in the scriptures. And we have been hearing all those tales since our childhood. But why has not that borne any fruit? We came to you hearing that you were a sadhu. But you alone can say how you have entered within our hearts. The place where we would fain have seated God, you have come and occupied that place. How hard we have striven to drive you out from that place so that Parameshwara might be seated there — we have discussed ever so much, presented your case to the pundits saying that you were God incarnate and argued with them with the intention of having our weakness destroyed by them but uptil now no body has been able to displace you. No body's

learning, intelligence and dialectics have been able to disprove that. Helplessly, therefore, we have been forced to call you God."

"You have said that like the wealthy ladies who conduct their affairs from behind the screen, you too have been performing your *leelas*. Seeing your disease, your outer covering, outsiders will fly away. But the fortunate one who will receive a grain of your grace shall understand the mystery of your *leela*. Lord, you alone know whether by speaking about these few outer things you are wheedling us or settling the issue. But the question arises in my mind: is it possible for one to discern the beingness (or Bhava) of God through such tales of separation-pangs told in regard to the *leelas* of Radhakrishna, Ramasita or Gauranga? Laughing and weeping is the *leela* of man. When through such *leelas* they could be considered as God, then is not this disease of yours also the measure of your *leela*, specially when you yourself have divulged the reason for this?"

"And, Lord, as to the other question, from the day you came out of Dakshineswar the fate of ordinary people has brightened up. Because of this pretext of disease thousands of men and women have had the darshan of your feet."

'Ramakrishnadeva then said, "You are telling all these because of your faith." On hearing this from his lips I said,

"Thakur, enough of lengthening the talk! You are acknowledging my faith, for this I am compelled to call you God. I was a heretic, a barbarian and an arch atheist — I to call a man God! God Himself was seeking out a little place in my heart, and forsooth now it appears that by having faith today I have installed you in the position of God! Lord, be that so, give me that strength, that power so that I can really do so. If through my faith being a man you become God, that is not your ordinary *leela*, again. Thakur, God Himself has to stand before man by furnishing so many introductions and testimonials, and do you mean to say that if a man declares another man as God people will just accept that? You may say whatever you are pleased to say and everything behoves you."

'Even then Ramakrishnadeva continued to say, "Do I not so much wish to stay at ease?"

"आमार कि साध हयना
ये एकटु स्वच्छन्दे थाकि ?

I replied,

"It is all a disappointment for us to try to answer your points. Yet I shall remind you of only one thing and then close my lips. Thakur, one day in the evening standing on the western verandha of your room you said, 'Whoever will come with the hankering for realization of God, for attainment of knowledge and seeking to know how he could see Him, his aspirations will be fulfilled.' Then laying stress on your words you again said, 'O my men, verily his longings will be fulfilled.' Thakur, will you tell me who is the man who can tell this? Who is that siddhapurusha who has the boldness to say so? With our ocular perception we are noticing how heretics without any spiritual practices are getting wonderfully transformed. Even after seeing all these are we to have a mistaken opinion about you? If you say so, we are just helpless. And when you refer again and again to your disease, may I ask you, one thing: Sri Radha in Brindavan, what was her terrific suffering in the tenth state of *viraha* caused by separation from Krishna. Can her a single day's suffering be borne by any jiva? Because Radha performed this *nara-leela* was she ever without Krishna? You yourself have said, "Brahma and sakti are identical." As I said this his face flushed. As soon as the symptoms of ecstasy were discernible I ended the talk.'

THE PARAMAHAMSA AND THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

Testing Each the Other

On one side the love and regard between the Paramahamsa and the young seeker was growing fast. But it was no mere sentimental attachment that marked their relationship. The mental make of the two being dissimilar, the urge to test and analyse each other was growing in them. The Paramahamsa had taken a vow never to touch money, not to speak of giving any value to it. The resolve had such a telling effect on his constitution that he could not even unknowingly allow a coin touch his body. This appeared to the questioning youth rather unusual and bordering on affectation. He was not prepared to grant the possibility of such a reaction in a normal man. He would rather have the man thoroughly tested before arriving at a conclusion. One day when the saint was out, the curiosity-stricken youth just managed to conceal a silver coin in his seat. No sooner did the unsuspecting saint occupy the seat than he sprang from it as if stung by a scorpion. He exclaimed that there was something which caused him pain and forced him to recoil from that seat. The attending disciples at once set about examining the seat and found a silver coin somehow deposited there. Narendra stood aghast at this development! Surely there was no pretension here, in this untutored child of Nature. The Paramahamsa however was quick to understand the design behind this incident. He fully approved of Narendra's act. 'It is not enough that you readily believe in the words of a holy man. Examine day and night whether there is harmony between the words and the deeds of such a person. As the money-changer scrutinises each coin, you try to find whether a person is genuine or counterfeit.' With these words the Paramahamsa approved of the youth's testing him. The critical-minded young man was immensely pleased with this approbation by the Master of his venture.

It was indeed a fact that the Paramahamsa had an inordinate fondness for Narendra, bordering on craze. Despite this, on an occasion he assumed an unusual and unaccountable coldness towards his beloved. For months at a stretch he did not speak a word to the youth. When the youth presented himself in his room every now and then the Paramahamsa would not cast even a stealing glance at him. Verily it was indifference to the core! And it was sufficient to touch any visitor to the quick. But the usually sensitive Narendra was not in the least affected by it. As was his wont he came, paid homage to the Master, attended to his accustomed activities, maintained his blissful demeanour and then returned home. This went on week after week. After this long lapse, the Paramahamsa one day broke his silence and remarked, 'Have you not noticed that I do not these days exchange a word with you? How is it that all the same you are regularly visiting this place?' This kind of insult added to injury would drive any man into a rage. 'On the ground that you do not talk with me, should I think of cutting myself away from you? Does relationship between us merely rest on exchange of words?' — was the reply that the youth submitted. This immensely pleased the Paramahamsa. Each had tested the other no doubt in his own way, but the coalescing of these two seemingly conflicting minds had been going on steadily and spontaneously.

The Fulfilment

It was after running to quite a number of savants with the vexing question 'Sir, have you seen God?' that the divinely athirst youth had repaired to the Paramahamsa. Till then he had nowhere received a satisfying answer to his query. It was only at Dakshineswar that the soul-captivating affirmation had come ; 'Yes, my boy, I have an unbroken perception of Him and I shall also bring you to it.' Subsequently the Master awakened the divine consciousness in the youthful seeker. Transcendental communion and the dissolution of the little self in the Absolute were graciously bestowed on him. Nought has the individual to gain beyond the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. From that Absolute State Vivekananda was called back by the Master to the relative plane. The Master then put a pointed question to the just then enlightened disciple, 'What is your life's wish ?' 'Bless me that I may ever be lost in the Absolute' was the submission that followed. 'You blab like ordinary ones. Do have a higher state than what you ask for' reprimanded the Master. The disciple stood baffled at this startling statement. 'You have not come to this earth to enjoy the spiritual feast all by yourself ; you have come to share it with others' was the Master's further commission. The Master was the first to know this disciple's great life-mission. It behoved an Apostle Vivekananda to first nourish the spiritually starved and then and then only enter into Beatitude. The disciple quietly submitted to the Master's charge unto him. Contrary to the normal way this disciple had the consummation first and the training afterwards. What took place in his case used to get explained through a simile by the Master. Creepers of the gourd variety put forth berry first and flower next. Exalted ones like Narendra have illumination first and spiritual practices next, these very practices being more an aspect of their mission rather than any self-preparation. The Paramahamsa had intuited this unique position of his favourite disciple.

In the benign presence of the Paramahamsa, Vivekananda was rapidly ripening into fulfilment in the plane of spirituality. The Paramahamsa felt that the object of his own advent had started taking a shape and that his physical presence was no longer necessary. He decided to cast off the slough and selected an auspicious day for that purpose. A few days before he dropped the mortal coil he summoned Vivekananda into his room and was closeted with him. Both the Master and the Disciple sat in meditation and were long lost in the Beyond. In that exalted state the Disciple had a unique experience ; he felt that a divine power designed to redeem the world took possession of him. In corroboration of it, the Paramahamsa coming from the exalted state, made a significant statement. The purport of it was that the spiritual power which had been generated and accumulated in his person had been made over just then to a worthy successor for the welfare of humanity. All this was verily a divine dispensation. The bestower felt profoundly happy in that the spiritualising potency which had been acquired stage by stage had now been bequeathed to a worthy recipient. Vivekananda in his turn bowed his head in reverence and submitted to be the humble instrument of the Divine. The Power that was in the one a while back got transplanted into the other a while later.

The Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda have therefore to be taken as an Inseparable Pair. The life of either without that of the other would perforce have been incomplete. From various points of view can it be seen that one complemented and made complete the career of the other. All root and no fruit is of no avail. And fruit is impossible without the root. The Paramahamsa was the root and his apostle verily the fruit. Lightning and thunder give completion to the cloud phenomenon ; the one without the other is an incomplete cosmic function. Sri Ramakrishna was the energising lightning and Vivekananda the thundering dispenser of the energy. The image of the presiding deity in a temple has its two phases—the Immobile and the Mobile (the *Achalamurti* and the *Utsavamurti*). The former is permanently rooted in the sanctum sanctorum, the latter comes out in procession on festival days. The devotee has to make efforts to gain access to the sanctum in order to adore the Mulamurti. But the Utsavamurti by appearing in public makes it easy to one and all to adore the deity. In the former case grace draws people to where it is enshrined, and in the latter, grace goes about seeking its beneficiaries. As such both the phases are indispensable in the scheme of temple worship. Here the Paramahamsa takes the place of Achalamurti and the Swami that of the Utsavamurti.

People there are who make something like a distinction between devotion and knowledge. But the Master was never tired of pointing out on every pertinent occasion that pure devotion and pure knowledge are one and the same. Loving without knowing or knowing without loving cannot be. The oneness of love and knowledge has been unmistakably revealed in the lives of these complementary personalities. The Paramahamsa shows himself as a Bhakta to all intents and purposes; but within he is a Jnani to the core. The upheaval of rolling waves is seen on the surface, but the ocean at the bottom is all stillness. Even such is the Paramahamsa. He chants the name of the Lord, he sings, he dances, he goes into trance; thus he presents himself in an exuberance of devotion. But the unfathomable Con-science is ever in Itself. This in reality is the stuff of the Paramahamsa. Vivekananda on the other hand presents himself as a searching Jnani; with the sword of discrimination he mercilessly cuts asunder all the trouble-giving superimposition on the Reality. Before the onslaught of his penetrating intellect and unrelenting analysis, no sentimentalism, no meaningless customs and manners, no privileges, no exclusiveness, no superstition, no dogmatism, no weakness masquerading as religion, no artificial barriers, no narrowness or bigotry of any kind can hope to linger. But within the heart of this roaring lion was the tenderness and meekness of a lamb which characterises a devotee. The elephant has tusks without to assail with and teeth within to masticate and absorb. Even such is this Cyclone of a Vivekananda. Viveka or Discrimination that he is, he mercilessly uproots all the weed, and fosters the plant of the life eternal. It is given only to a few among us to see the all-soft, sweet, soul-captivating tenderness in this tearing and roaring Rudra. Within he is a Bhakta to the core, without he is a blazing Jnani. Indeed he who is a Bhakta is verily a Jnani.

From days of yore it has been the tradition in India to classify the Enlightened Ones as Brahmarishis and Rajarishis. The first group take to fostering the creative genius of Self-culture. Varieties of sadhana-patterns through which the spiritual potency may be spontaneously and unfailingly drawn out are discovered by these explorers into the Realm Beyond. Their work is akin to tapping at various springs that lie hidden within a well. When access is gained to the Source, life-elevating energy gets accumulated in abundance. Those who accomplish this are the Brahmarishis. But it is not enough that the springs in a well copiously gush out in life-giving waters. These waters have to be drawn out as abundantly as they pour out and the drawn out waters have to be properly canalised and distributed. Otherwise stagnation may set in and obstruct the Cosmic plan and purpose. Distribution is as important as production and this applies more relentlessly to the spiritual field than to any other. Those who undertake to co-ordinate and distribute the spiritual wealth are classified as Rajarishis. The Paramahamsa explored and exploited the original Source to completion. But the completion is not in the mere discovering and getting; what has been got has to be utilised as well. Mother Nature tries at all levels to complete her plan by creating and by utilising. Where the creation does not culminate in utilisation the plan is incomplete. A kind of vacuum is thereby created and Nature abhors vacuum. The Paramahamsa found that his creative achievements might go to waste if they were not distributed and utilised through a proper vehicle. Like a boiler fully laden with steam he hankered for a worthy engine through which he could direct his spiritual energy. Vivekananda on his side came as a mighty vehicle seeking the Propelling Power. That this Propelling Power was the philosopher's stone which would totally transform him, he did not know. In the meeting of these two

Personalities a possible Cosmic vacuum got infilled. Through the vehicle of Vivekananda the garnered spiritual energy of the Master became available in profusion to the spiritually starved souls all over the globe. The spiritual inundation which they released is continuing to spread. The full working out of its potency is yet in the womb of time. These twin Personalities have each a distinctiveness with an appeal of his own. Those who are brought up in the old ways easily understand and take to the Paramahamsa, and through the Paramahamsa they come to understand Vivekananda, the modern vehicle. But those who are nurtured on modern lines easily take to the Vivekananda way, and through him they gain access to the ancient pattern of the Paramahamsa. We see two personalities representing two approaches—one necessarily leading to the other for completeness.

A coin has necessarily its two sides — the stamp on either being equally important. The obverse reveals the ruler or the Government whose issue it is, the reverse indicates its worth. In the latest mint of the coin of Indian spiritual heritage the Paramahamsa and the Swami happen to be the two sides — representing the Sanatana Dharma and the Yuga Dharma, the Eternal Verity and Its Adaptation to suit the age. The uniqueness behind this one Personality in two forms is that several of the intricate and perplexing points in the Vedanta get themselves best explained and clarified through their lives. They may be said to be the living commentary on the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita has it that Arjuna recoiled from action because of ignorance. The other phase of this is brought out by Vivekananda in his choosing to be lost to the world in and through Beatitude. In the former case Sri Krishna admonished Arjuna, his counterpart, saying that action was the only means to actionlessness. In the latter case the Paramahamsa made his counterpart understand that blending action and Beatitude was superior to mere Beatitude.

In defining the Ultimate Reality the Upanishad proclaims, आसीनो दूरं व्रजति ' Sitting It goes everywhere.' Brahman may be said to be static as well as kinetic — the one aspect being as important as the other. It sits as well as makes Its presence everywhere. The Paramahamsa was where he sat, and the Swami made his presence felt all over the globe. The Immobile-mobile uniqueness of Brahman is best exemplified in this Dual Personality.

पूर्णमद: पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

' Infinite is what is beyond manifestation, and what has become manifested also is Infinite '. This is about the sublimest affirmation of the Upanishads. The Paramahamsa represents the ideal of Nirguna Brahman, the Infinite beyond manifestation. Swami Vivekananda represents that of the Saguna Brahman, the Infinite in and through manifestation. Sectarian philosophers are inclined to differentiating and minimising the value of the one or the other. The correct position is to equate the one with the other — the Saguna with the Nirguna. The Paramahamsa and the Swami have done this best through their extraordinary lives. Now spiritual aspirants have a very important point to bear in mind. A good teacher sometimes magnifies one particular aspect of a thing in order to drive it home effectively in the minds of the taught. The Paramahamsa in his personal life represents the conserving side of spirituality, and the Swami on his side has magnified the releasing and the distributing side. The work of the latter necessarily accompanies the work of the former. But spiritual aspirants have perforce to start their career with a simultaneous seeking and serving ; for one aids the other. In other words genuine followers of these Masters have to meditate as well as do work as an act of worship.

(*Concluded*)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

(*The Master and disciple*)

P. NAGARAJA RAO

I

In the course of human history there have been repeated attempts to challenge and ridicule the claims of religion and liberate men from folly and the weakness of will. The contemporary challenge is the most powerful and has influenced all sections of the community, the educated and the uneducated. The challenge takes up two lines of attack. The religious truths and categories like God, soul, immortality, sin, etc. are declared as unverifiable and unknowable through the ordinary modes of knowledge. They are dogmatic declarations, based on the facile imagination of men and have no existence in reality. Secondly, the practice of religion in the past and even today by several sects has produced untold misery to men. It is frankly antihumanistic. Religions teach us to fly away from the social agonies of the age to mountain tops and monasteries. It has been indifferent to the welfare of men here and now. It has developed an escapist other-worldliness. The various dogmatic theologies of the world have degenerated into arrogant sects, and vie with one another in the art of competitive indoctrination of masses through all horrible methods. Each of these sects claims to be in exclusive possession of the truth and declare, its rivals as heretics. It is the anti-rational and antihumanistic nature of religion that has made the critics debunk it. Some have been exasperated by the exploitation of the masses' ignorance by the vested interest in religion. They declare, 'A militant atheism is better than a dishonest religion.'

The challenge has been accepted by the great saints of India, and there has been no age when the representatives of the authentic religion have not appeared in India. Sri Ramakrishna is our great Rishi. He is an illustrious example of the mystical tradition (perennial philosophy) which runs right through the religious history of this country from the days of the Rig-Veda. In the words of Romain Rolland, 'he is the consummation of the two thousand years of spiritual life of three hundred million people.' He is a branch of the true vine. 'He did not come to destroy or fulfil but to bear testimony.' He did not speak like a scribe from his books or as a bespectacled scholar from his research thesis. He spoke from his authentic religious experience. His message is faithful to the past, full of possibilities for the future, deeply rooted in our national consciousness, thoroughly representative of the authentic and true in religion. He is the starting point of the renaissance of Hinduism. This illiterate temple priest did not take anything on trust. He is the unwearied experimenter of all religions and forms of worship. He had been initiated into Tantric, Vaishnava, and Vedanta methods of spiritual discipline. He then practised with success the Islamic and the Christian forms of spiritual life. After a full and vivid firsthand personal experience, he declared the 'unity of all religions' and 'fellowship of all faiths'. This is the corner-stone of the religion we need. Ramakrishna says, 'I have had to practise all the religions once. Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, and I have walked the path of different denominations of Hinduism again — of Sakta, Vaishnava, Vedanta, and other sects. I have found that it is the same God towards whom all are travelling, only they are coming through diverse ways.'

This declaration of the Paramahamsa sums up the true character of the spiritual religion of India. The centre of religion has shifted from authority, church, and scriptures to spiritual experience. It alone affirms the truth of religion. The way of looking at religion makes it rational and non-dogmatic. It deals a final blow to all that stands between God and Man.

The fact of spiritual realization discloses the truth that the different religions of the world aim at one and the same God. The quest is the same for all. The goal is the same. The way to it differs from religion to religion. The language, the mode of presentation, the dogmas and the rituals, differ, because of the differences in the psychological temper of men. All religions are pathways to God. None need run down any, or seek to convert others. Each should grow to his best. Some of us are attracted by the 'way of knowledge', some choose the 'way of devotion', and others incline to the 'way of deeds'.

The fellowship of faiths, the fundamental oneness of all religions takes the fangs away from the acts of bigots. It engenders a universal toleration, an active love and charity to all fellowmen. It removes the ills of religion, hatred and strife, conversion, crusades, and inquisition. Sage Ramakrishna lived and practised equally all faiths and declared with no air of condescension, that all faiths are true alike.

Like all the great world teachers, he too speaks in parables. He uses the parables with a remarkable skill for the teaching of morals. The didactic purposes are put through simple observations full of worldly wisdom with a tinge of quaint humour. His direct teaching, homely argument, attracted all to his fold.

For the first time Max Muller gave him the title, the Mahatma in an article in the Nineteenth Century. Max Muller has himself collected the sayings of Ramakrishna. Sri Rajagopalachari describes Ramakrishna's sayings as a Upanishad.

Referring to the nature of the ultimate Reality as personal and impersonal, Ramakrishna said, 'A dyer used to dye his dresses in a special manner. He used to ask his customer, "How would you like me to dye your dress?" If the customer answered red, the dyer dipped the dress in a vat and then took it out saying, "Here is your dress dyed red". Another wanted yellow, the dyer dipped the cloth in the same vat and took it out, lo! it was yellow. Also for other colours he used the same vat, obtaining different results. A customer who had noticed all this, told the dyer, "My friend, I have no preference for any particular colour. I would like mine to be dyed in the colour you are dyed." The Lord now shows Himself in one form, now in another, and sometimes in no form, always according to the needs of the devotee. Only the divine Dyer knows in what colour He Himself is dyed.' The spiritual experience is the same but the credal formulations are different relative to the minds of men.

Ramakrishna brings out the true characteristic of Indian philosophy, namely, that it is not merely an intellectual exercise but an integral transformation. It is not mere speculative enjoyment. He says, 'Learning books on philosophy, grammar, etc. only hinder and puzzle the mind, "the granthas" (books) are only "granthis" (knots). Mere speculation is of no use. An almanac foretells heavy rains, but no matter however much you squeeze the book, not one drop of water will come out of it.'

Ramakrishna gives us the fundamental tenets of the eternal gospel. Religion is one. The followers of a living faith are guided and illumined by one light. We are all pilgrims to the same light.

To enter the spiritual life, we must first purify ourselves, through the practice of charity and devotion to the Lord, in utter sincerity. Ceremonial purity and ethical excellence are absolutely necessary. Ethical life purges us of our egoism and ennobles us to have an all-embracing love of God. Love of God transforms into unstinted service and charity towards our fellowmen. Humanism, to be effective, must be rooted in religion. The Katha-Upanisad declares, 'not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach the Lord through right knowledge.'

Divine love is the result of good life. Sri Ramakrishna was once asked when shall 'I' be free, his pithy answer was when 'I' shall cease to be. There you have in a nutshell the great mystic doctrine of 'self naughting' as the means of salvation. The Crucifixion must precede Resurrection.

Ramakrishna never dwelt upon the vileness of man's mortal nature, and the enormity of his sin. He declared that God and man are organic. Man is not a fallen creature tied down to a body of lust without any glimmer of divinity.

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement has restored the true meaning of the Vedanta. It is the religion we need. It is catholic in outlook, universal in application, and humanistic in practice. It declares that religion can never absolve us from our duty. True religion is the basis of character. It satisfies the demand of the intellect and the needs of humanity. Some of our erstwhile agnostics like Aldous Huxley are among its admirers today.

The religion of Ramakrishna is the urgent need of India and humanity. In the philosophy of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda we have the splendid example of a new orientation of the monistic philosophy of Sankara. It emphasizes the identity of worship and service. The movement has introduced a missionary zeal.

In an over-organized world like ours, the only possible way to keep away from the attritions of time is the companionship of the great mystics like Ramakrishna. They are, in the words of Aldous Huxley, the salt of the earth. If they are not there, there is nothing to keep our earth disinfected, nothing to prevent it from falling to decay. The mystics are the channels through which a little knowledge flows down into our human universe of ignorance and illusion. A totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and insane.

To an unbelieving world, based on untruth and lovelessness, with its alarming developments of nuclear weapons of destruction, given over to power and pelf, Sri Ramakrishna has given the gospel, that true religion is a force and not a mere form. It is our inward power that helps us to overcome failure, fear, and frustration. Swami Vivekananda sums up his Master's message which cannot be improved.

> 'Other teachers taught special religions which bear their names, but this great teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself. He left every religion undisturbed, because he had realised that in reality they are all part and parcel of one Eternal religion.'

On another occasion Vivekananda described his Master 'as the living commentary on the texts of the Upanishads, and was in fact the spirit of the Upanishads in human form.... the harmony of all the diverse thoughts in India.'

II

Swami Vivekananda spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in three continents and built the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission, and set it on the soundest foundation, to serve the needs of humanity as the most powerful spiritual force. But for Vivekananda, the great message of Ramakrishna would not have been so widely known and generally accepted, as it is to-day. He looked upon his master as the great avatar of our age. He writes :

> 'The time was ripe for one to be born, the embodiment of both head and heart ; the time was ripe for one to be born, who in one body would have the brilliant intellect of Sankara and the wonderfully expansive infinite heart of Chaitanya ; one who would see in every sect, the same spirit working, the same God, one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the outcast, for the down-trodden for everyone in this world, inside India or outside India ; and at the same time whose grand, brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts as would harmonise all conflicting sects, not only in India but outside India and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence .... Such a man was born, the time was ripe.'

Vivekananda was a tough and brilliant intellect. He had abundant energy, superhuman passion for anything he put his hands to, undaunted courage to go ahead with what he thought the right way. He never was timid, hesitant and faltering in anything he did. He attended the Parliament of Religions on 11th September 1893 in Chicago. His address to the Parliament marks a celebrated day in the history of Hinduism. Romain Rolland gives us a graphic description of the impression produced by the Swamiji in the West. 'The *American Express,* applauded his speech in glowing terms. It declared, " undoubtedly the greatest figure is Vivekananda in the Parliament of Religions " '. The American newspapers described every aspect of the Swamiji's personality, 'His red robe drawn in at the waist by an orange cord, his great yellow turban which accentuated the raven black of his hair, his olive complexion, his dark eyes, his red lips and above all his wonderful voice, an admirable baritone having the vibrations of a Chinese '. His speech was 'like a tongue of flame '. It kept the audience spell-bound and their attention never flagged.

In his address he laid the foundations for the advocacy of Hinduism as the universal religion of the world. In his address he laid stress on universal tolerance and human brotherhood. He declared :

> 'Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendent fanaticism have long pestered this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation and sent whole nations to despair.'

The Swamiji believed in the eternal truths of the Vedas, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and the Yoga-sutras. He pointed out to the world of warring religions that all religions are equally true and each religion is one of the many approaches to the Lord. On the doors of the American Vedanta centres runs the message, 'He is one but the sages describe him differently '. Swamiji all his life pleaded intensely for the fellowship of faiths and the fundamental oneness of Reality. He was no lover of easy, soft religion. He was critical and rational in his approach to religion. He repeatedly said, 'cease to look upon every little village superstition as the mandate of the Vedas.'

In the opinion of Vivekananda religion is the most powerful instrument of social regeneration and individual development. His philosophy is practical Vedanta. He imparted to the monistic Vedanta of Sankara a practical shape by throwing into relief the positive aspect. He looked upon religion as the great transformer of our narrow selfish life to one of charity and goodness. He believed in the philosophy of active life. He identified the service to the poor and the downtrodden as the worship of Daridra Narayana. It did a lot to translate the Vedantic ideal into all the planes of existence, social, economic, political and educational. He writes :

> 'I do not believe in a God or religion that cannot wipe the widow's tears and bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.'

Swami Vivekananda struck the tolerant note of Hinduism in all his speeches and letters. He declared :

> 'Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man... Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this by work or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion.'

The Swamiji introduced a genuine missionary spirit into Hinduism. He equated service and worship into one. In an important letter he wrote :

> 'For our motherland a synthesis of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam — Vedantic brain and Islamic body are necessary.'

It is through the great efforts and inspiring leadership of the Swamiji that the Ramakrishna movement has come to stay. Vivekananda has been the inspiration to many of our great leaders e.g. Dr Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhiji and others. Vivekananda is our first religious leader, awakening us to the evils in our national life. He declared :

> 'Our great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and it was one of the causes of our fall in the past and if we continued the neglect the result would not be different.'

He attacked the caste-system in the most forcible manner. He writes :

> 'India's doom was sealed the very day the caste-system was invented and stopped free communion with one another. No man, no nation can hate others and live.'

There can be no happiness for any of us until it is won for all. The great Swamiji died at the young age of 39.

SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

SWAMI RITAJAṆANDA

Spiritual enlightenment may be defined as the goal of religion. In all the great movements in religion, the reformations, the developments of new cults and the formation of new creeds, there has always been someone who came as a prophet or messenger of God. Sometimes he expressed his message openly, sometimes he gave it to a few chosen and intimate followers. When he made a deep impression on people by his life and actions, and convinced them that his message had a special value, they came to adore him and accepted him as the leader in their religious life. Not all prophets manifested a desire to go around rousing the world, but they all had the power to generate individual groups and to give them a new, inspiring faith in spiritual ideals.

History shows that the core of religion is often related to higher values and that it demands great sacrifices. On the other hand, there is the worldly life and human nature itself, which tend to keep humanity busy with things of the world and which make immediate objects more attractive than the rewards of virtue or piety. Consequently, no society for centuries has ever held firmly and closely to any religious ideal. All high ideals are seen, in the course of time, to have been compromised to worldly situations. In modern times the outer forms of religion have assumed greater importance than the inner substance, for these are easier to hold to. New interpretations have appeared explaining the truths or teachings of the prophets to suit the times. Scriptures have been intellectualized to a great extent and they serve as a diversion rather than for spiritual inspiration. If they fail to keep alive an interest in higher values, it is because there are no men and women who live up to them and exhibit in their lives the results of following them.

With our rapid advance in scientific knowledge, we have learned to look at the world purely from the level of intellect. The discoveries of man's inner nature, his conditioned behaviour pattern, blood chemistry, mental functions, etc., have made the study of man more and more challenging. Investigation of the complicated activity of the brain has made us feel that we are living in a 'brave new world' which we can shape and alter according to our needs.

Thus the modern world has created a fairyland, where everything is fascinating, and there is hardly any time to look for anything beyond the sense perceptions. Our way of thinking, also, has become altered by these conditions, so that we are unable to see eye to eye with the older approaches. One main defect in this new orientation is that man is not becoming stronger, but weaker. With cars produced in large numbers, we are slowly becoming less capable of using our legs. When machinery replaces manual labour, the hands lose their flexibility and usefulness. In the same manner, when we seek comfort and pleasure we are weakened. Like a rocket we are all brilliant and radiant, shine for a while, and fade away.

Religion has never paid much attention to success in these material fields. The great teachers felt it was harmful for spiritual development to become involved in worldly affairs because, being fascinated by the wonders one discovers and creates, one is prone to neglect the spirit in the process. Consequently they all said: 'What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and to forget his soul?' They made a great distinction between the realm of the spirit and the world. To follow them is to give up the world and attain the inner, spiritual life. The same is true even to this day. If spiritually minded people did not have the courage of their convictions about the spiritual life, why should thousands of them be drawn in search of it? Although the words of great teachers do not inspire all people, they do open to some a new field of study — a quest for the verification of the ideals taught by the select few who have laid stress on matters of eternal value, in contrast to the advantage of the material world.

We shall examine this question: What is it that people seek in religion and what is the knowledge they get, which is said to be the religious ideal?

Since the path itself is different from the path of the world, the scenes that come before us are also different. For example, while walking over level ground one gets a view of the surrounding country which is not identical with the view one gets when one climbs a mountain. To a person who has never climbed a mountain, the view of the landscape from there is unintelligible and impossible to believe. In the same manner supersensory experiences are difficult to explain to a person who has never had one. Often the extraordinary perceptions of saints and mystics do not belong to normal life. The new knowledge they get is achieved by the mind itself, when its ordinary functions are properly trained. This type of knowledge cannot be shared directly, but one can be guided and directed so that he or she is able to get it personally, from within themselves. 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, "Lo here!" or "Lo there!", for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.' (Luke 17). All of us have to seek it and with persistent effort find it for ourselves.

The Katha Upanishad (II. ii. 14) says: 'The sages realize that indescribable Supreme Joy as "This is That".' Not by verbal knowledge nor through inference does one realize it, but by direct and immediate experience. Similar texts can be gathered from the words of many saints and sages in all religions. The purpose is to give us a conviction that Spiritual Enlightenment is a reality, and a possibility for all people.

Buddha refers to this as Nirvana, which is equivalent to Salvation, or the goal of religion. But one has to achieve it by one's own efforts. When the mind is free from cravings, Buddha says, one realizes that he has attained release. Being a deep mystic experience, it influences our intellectual and emotional nature. One of its characteristics is said to be of the nature of bliss, although even this word is hard to explain, since we often mistakenly identify bliss with happiness.

Certain texts refer to this higher experience as mystical, as an ecstasy, etc. but these terms are inadequate and perhaps even confusing. Rational thinkers, hearing such terms, brush them aside, saying: 'If the purpose of religion is to go into a state of joy, a forgetfulness of this world of sorrows and to enter a world of dreams, it can be done without the help of austerities and disciplines. One can easily induce such states by chemical means. We can dream of heavens and all the joys of a paradise by inhaling certain drugs.' The first and foremost point to remember is that the state of bliss referred to by the sages is very different. The picture on a motion picture screen is not the same as a picture painted on a canvas. The first is unreal, though it has the semblance of reality; it is merely projected on the screen. It can be made to disappear by shutting off the light or removing the film. But the painted canvas is real. It is a part of the canvas. In the same manner the bliss of realization, even if we look at it from the ordinary experience of happiness, cannot be altered. It never dulls with the passing of time but is something constant, until the supporting personality itself is destroyed or damaged.

Secondly, this realization is the result of work, and is an end attainable through a fixed course. The disciplines of yoga, mental and physical, culminate in this, as does the path of devotion, which ends finally with the overpowering love for God. The spiritual experience comes as a culmination of the efforts of the aspirant and is necessary to give a meaning and purpose to what we do here on earth.

In the Buddhist scripture called Majjina Nikaya (Rathavrinita) there is a dialogue between Sariputta and Purna. Sariputta asked the latter, who was intent upon a meditative life, whether he was leading the religious life for purity of morals, or for purity of the mind, or for purity of views, or purity in overcoming doubts, or for purity of knowledge, or for knowledge and insight into the Path. He answered 'No' to each question. 'But,' he said, 'I am doing meditations for attaining Nirvana without support.' Since this is not possible without the other qualities, he was asked to explain.

'Friend,' Purna replied, 'if the Lord had preached purity of morals, purity of the mind and the rest, as being the attainment of Nirvana without support, then he would have preached that the attaining of Nirvana without support exists along with grasping (i.e. with desires for enjoyment). And if the attainment of Nirvana without support were apart from these things, then the ordinary man might win Nirvana, for the ordinary man is without them. But all these are like relays, one helping to reach the other and finally the last stage being the attainment of Nirvana.'

Buddha said that religious life is lived as plunged in Nirvana. Nirvana is its aim and end. There is nothing beyond it. He describes it as follows (Udana, VIII. 1-4) :

> 'There is, monks, the stage where there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind, nor the stage of infinity of consciousness, nor the stage of nothingness... neither this world nor the other world, nor sun and moon, neither coming nor going, neither staying nor passing away nor arising. This indeed is the end of pain.'
>
> 'Hard to see, without turning away from enjoyments, indeed.
> It is a truth not easy to see;
> Mastered is craving for him who knows,
> Nothing is there for him who knows . . .'

This description of Nirvana is akin to the realization referred to in the Upanishads. The ultimate experience is indescribable. It is beyond everything we understand with our senses or mind. The Ultimate Truth is incomprehensible. It can be referred to only as, 'Not this, not this.' But still it is not 'nothing', but a positive experience, where a person comes to a new knowledge of himself and the world. He cannot make himself understood because he tells of something which is of a different language. It is neither physical nor mental. It has nothing to do with getting into a state of inertia or absolute trance, nor is it an expression of genius nor intellect. All these explanations can only baffle our imagination, since it is not related to anything in our daily experience.

That God in his pure essence is indescribable has been felt by many people. St. Augustine said : 'Man can know what God is not and not what He is.' The Advaita Vedanta tells us Brahman has to be sought by the 'Not this, not this' method. In any case the ultimate truth, if accepted as infinite, cannot be a personality. Personality is a limitation, although for a human mind, which can think only in concrete terms, personality is helpful for spiritual life. Men of realization, from the example of their lives, point out that Spiritual Enlightenment is a state in which only some of the qualities attributed to God are manifest in themselves. Love, one of the commonest features found in all of them, which is beyond all distinctions, is an expression of the highest type and has a magical power of influencing the lives of all who come under its power.

Spiritual Enlightenment is an experience brought to a person by an intensely contemplative life. The importance of contemplation has been stressed by all who have known or walked with God. Even in the non-theistic Eightfold Path of Buddha the last discipline is right concentration. For the religious person, where the helpful method of accepting a Personal God is present, the concentration is directed toward that God. The Upanishads have repeatedly said :

> 'Atman, smaller than the small, greater than the great, is hidden in the hearts of all living creatures. A man who is free from desires beholds the majesty of the Self through tranquillity of the senses and the mind, and becomes free from grief.' (Katha I. ii. 20).
>
> 'The wise man, who by means of concentration on the Self, realizes that ancient, effulgent One who is hard to be seen, unmanifest, hidden, and who dwells in the buddhi and rests in the body—he, indeed, leaves joy and sorrow far behind.' (Katha. I. ii. 12.).

The final knowledge is traced to the world within oneself rather than to an external God.

Some Christian mystics have referred to this experience as the discovery of the Christ within. Some said it was a rebirth, a new life, a manifestation of God or a total surrender of oneself to the Lord, who takes charge of the devotee and works out His will. Some have called it absorbed meditation or *Samadhi*, while others have described it as ecstasy or a beatific vision, a divine communion or a feeling of the divine presence. The variety of language and images used by different mystics gives no clue to understanding the process.

The nature of this experience will ever remain a sealed book, whatever may be said by different scholars. There is no possibility of connecting this intuitive, direct knowledge with the logical thinking of the mind. Those who insist that sense perception alone gives valid knowledge cannot have a correct estimate either of themselves or the outside world, and this is the view of thinkers who use powers beyond the senses and arrive at inferential knowledge. Likewise, the man who has attained knowledge through insight finds that all other methods reveal knowledge far below the knowledge he gets. It is not a matter for argument. We can never argue with a blind man about the colour of a rose, which does not exist for him. In view of this, Buddha never tried to describe the experience of Nirvana.

St. Teresa said, after such a knowledge, that her seeing God, whether it was correct or not, could not be explained. She could not of course recognize this as God because she had not seen Him before, but had only heard of Him. 'Yet I could certainly affirm it, for though He remains unseen, so clear a knowledge is impressed upon the soul that to doubt it seems quite impossible. The Lord is pleased that this knowledge should be so deeply engraved upon the understanding, that one can no more doubt it than one can doubt the evidence of one's eyes — indeed, the latter is easier, for we sometimes suspect that we have imagined what we see. Whereas here, though the suspicion may arise for a moment, there remains such complete certainty that the doubt has no more force.'

Ramȧkrishna told the doubting Naren: 'I have seen God. I see Him as I see you here, only more clearly.'

God can be seen, but not with our eyes. We may not believe in any other eyes than these, which can create illusions and whose powers are limited, yet we have to admit that people for centuries have been speaking about such a wondrous state. The eyes are only instruments and the real seeing is done by the mind. When the mind is made tranquil, freed from all disturbing activities, it does not assert itself, but yields its place to something far superior to itself. Then a new life starts, where ignorance and desires become extinct and insight and calmness take their place. For those who have never had any experience of this peace beyond all understanding, it hardly enters their thoughts or touches the fringes of their imagination. Everything connected with this life of ours is left once and for all, and we move to a region and state in which sorrows are removed forever. If it were only a temporary peace and state of joy, it would wear out and disappear. But it is a permanent state. Some have called the life after enlightenment the true and natural life of the soul, in comparison with which the ordinary life is a hypnotised one of darkness and illusion.

Although the process of enlightenment is hard to describe, it leaves its mark by the transformation brought to a person's character. The Hindus have often compared it to the transmutation of base metal to gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone. This process is not a gilding that wears off, but a total and complete alteration in the nature of the base metal. An iron sword becomes a golden sword, and gets the qualities of gold in all respects, yet keeps the outer shape. Now the sword's worth is not for its value as a weapon but for the precious metal it contains. It is no more valuable as a sword, because it has become soft. The external man remains the same individual, but he has undergone an extraordinary transformation. His position in society goes higher. The saint has become gentler and more worthy than all others. His value has gone up.

This mark of the inner transformation alone should give us a proper evaluation of religion in our lives. Enlightenment has conferred upon him a unique distinction. He becomes capable of enjoying a unique freedom. The freedom of a liberated soul is, again, something never known or experienced by people who have not attained that state. Patanjali, the composer of the Yoga aphorisms, has referred to it as Kaivalya. Buddha referred to it as Nirvana. In the Dhammapada, there is a description of this state. The bliss of Nirvana is explained as the life of happiness, hating none in the midst of those who hate: 'We dwell free from hate among men who hate.' Possessing nothing, it is a life free from care . . .

> 'Victory breeds hatred; the conquered dwell in sorrow. He who has given up (thoughts of both) victory and defeat, he is calm and lives happily.
>
> 'There is no fire like passion, no ill like hatred; there is no sorrow like physical existence (individuality); there is no happiness higher than tranquillity.
>
> 'Greediness is the worst of diseases; propensities are the worst of sorrows. To him who has known this, truly Nirvana is the highest bliss...'

Thus, after such an experience, the person loses all the tendencies that fetter one to a life lived at the mercy of passions, attachments and hatred. The greeds and lusts that plague a human being are no longer present. The person who has been cruel and wicked does not have any more of those qualities. Sri Ramakrishna used to illustrate this by saying that when the sword has become golden it cannot be used for cutting any more. In this state all the problems of life and death are solved, all perplexing questions are answered, and doubts and anxieties cease forever. This brings to the person an extraordinary calmness preventing the manifestation of all conflicts.

For most of us, our inability to cope with the struggles of a competitive civilization is due to an unbalanced and incorrect approach to the problem. Our minds are already tied to various other problems and much of its energy is wasted in adjustment alone. Under these conditions, a person has no peace of mind to think clearly, nor the energy to work without feeling tired. Taking a common illustration, we all know how one becomes filled with energy and joy when he has to do something which he likes: the benefits are assured. This only indicates that we do have the power to work with the feeling of joy. But we do not know how to start. We do not feel such a state in all our activities and associations. The reason is due to our individuality, which makes distinctions between one activity and another and between one person and another.

To the enlightened man, however, having transcended the ego, the whole world is a completely integrated one. He sees no conflicts, no jarring notes to disrupt the wonderful symphony that is going on everywhere. The more a person is conscious of individual notes, the more he fails to enjoy the concert music; and this may be studied even in relation to our body, our thinking, our daily living, and our relationship with others.

We are told that enlightenment makes a man see the divinity around him. The harmony behind this divinity is clear and hence the man of realization becomes part of the universe and feels that he is in all and that all is in him. Enlightenment is often compared to a state of infinite expansion. The mind is liberated from its finite anxieties. When it has lost all of its distinctive and isolating marks, it becomes the possessor of new strength and new joy. 'When passions are stilled and all worldly joys are silenced, then the word of God can be heard in the soul,' said Meister Eckhart. The voice of God, it should be noted, is not expressed in words as much as in actions. The saints worked night and day to draw the attention of people to this new life, to the message of hope, the message that ends all suffering and brings indestructible joy and peace incomprehensible.

Up to now, no one has unfolded the meaning of this experience, or understood it. But all have found that the change manifested in these people signifies something of extraordinary value. Perhaps there is an alteration in the blood cells or in the brain function. Physiologists and psychologists might eventually test the body of the saint from this standpoint.

Nevertheless, history has proved that these people are worthy of being worshipped. For they have brought to humanity something which is in great and unique demand, and something which science has not been able to supply.

Although these illumined persons could not be fully understood by others, they drew people to themselves like a magnet attracting particles of iron. They gave to them their power. Thus the world has been witnessing a unique phenomenon in the spiritual field, that one great religious founder starts a movement but it does not die with him, as he is succeeded by disciples and the chain is kept unbroken. His message continues to inspire generation after generation and rouses the inherent desire of people to seek God.

Still, whether we get the idea indirectly or by study, neither the scriptures nor even the masters can give us the final illumination in a lasting manner. That has to be achieved by our own efforts, though the teachers can take us close to it. This point was effectively brought out by the wonderful anecdote in the life of Buddha. His closest disciple was Ananda, who had the special privilege of attending on his master for years. When Buddha was about to leave his body, Ananda could not bear the thought of his death and burst into tears, to the surprise of Buddha, for a man of realization is not bound by worldly feelings and should be above them. The advice Buddha gave him may be read in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta :

> 'Have I not already... told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear unto us that we must divide ourselves from them ? Leave them, sever ourselves from them. How then, Ananda, can this be possible—whereas anything whatever born, brought into being and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution—how then can this be possible that such a being should not be dissolved ?... For a long time you have been very near to me by words of love, kind and good, that never varies and is beyond all measure. You have done well, Ananda ! Be earnest in your effort and you shall soon be free from the great evils : from sensuality, from individuality, from delusion and ignorance ! '

These words are very significant in explaining what enlightenment does for a person. It also points out how an enlightened person is free from illusions and false values. Realization is indeed a majestic state, where every object of human relationship appears in a new colour and with a force indescribable.

We have been observing the subject of spiritual enlightenment more in terms of its universal nature, as presented by great teachers, in order to point out that religions do show a man a way of attaining the highest values while living on earth. It is the saints who are the best representatives of a religion, and not the codes or the creeds. Spiritual Enlightenment brings to us the true message of God with greater power and beauty. It requires no cleverness — and indeed, often intellectual cleverness has put a great barrier to our listening to the words of the Lord, who speaks from within us, when we are in the proper condition. The demands may be great — the sacrifice and total denial of everything we cling to on earth ; but we get something in return which is beyond price. It blesses those who get it and it blesses even those who have met such people, who have seen them or even read their words. We can only repeat the farewell words of Buddha :

> 'Decay is inherent in all component things, but the truth will remain for ever. Work out your salvation with diligence.'

As a lamp brought into a room that has been dark for a thousand years illumines it immediately, the light of Jnana illumines the Jiva, and dispels his age-long ignorance.

— Sri Ramakrishna.

PRANAYAMA—ITS SIGNIFICANCE

T. S. RAGHAVAN

From the complete works of Swami Vivekananda, one can easily realise that Swami Vivekananda is the 'revealer, the interpreter to India of the treasures that she herself possesses in herself.' And we can also say that he acts as the confluence of the two main immense rivers of thought — the Eastern and the Western — the Orient and the Occident. The words and writings of Swami Vivekananda are like a rock where Hinduism could be at anchor — like a charter of Hindu faith. He says :

> 'If one religion be true, then all the others also must be true. Thus the Hindu Faith is yours as much as mine. We know that all religions alike, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, are but so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite.'

So there exist humanity and truth, if man becomes divine by realising the Infinite. During the process of such a realisation, it is to be borne in mind that man possesses in himself inherently both truth that is lower and higher and he is not travelling from error to truth but climbing up from truth that is lower to truth that is higher. He wants truth that is material as well as absolute and wants to experience that absolute truth for himself. When he has grasped it, realised it and felt it within his heart of hearts, then alone he is beyond all doubts, never in darkness and crookedness that hinder his march towards the goal.

The science of Raja yoga proposes to give us such a means to observe the internal states and to put before humanity a practical and scientifically worked out method of reaching this truth. Raja yoga consists of the eight steps — Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prānāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāranā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi. Of these, Pranayama forms the subject of the present article as it is the switchboard to the science of Raja yoga.

Pranayama means the control of Prana — the vital force in every being. Pranayama is not, as many would think, something about the breath alone, although it can be related. Breathing, as we may know presently, is only a means to get to the real Pranayama.

From thought down to the lowest force, every thing is but the manifestation of Prana. So the knowledge *per se* of this Prana is Pranayama. Knowledge is power and we have to acquire this power, if we desire the fruit of Raja yoga. We get at power only through restrictions self-imposed, that means by effective control of the instruments of knowledge. As Swamiji says :

> 'Just as knowing that knowing which we shall know everything, similarly knowing this Prana, one has grasped all the forces of the Universe, mental or physical. He who has controlled the Prana has controlled his body and all the bodies that exist, because the Prana is the generalised manifestation of force.'

It follows, therefore, that the most obvious manifestation of this Prana in the human body is the motion of the lungs and the controlling of such a motion of the lungs is Pranayama. As Prana moves the lungs, the movement of the lungs draws in the air by pump action. There is thus a muscular power which moves the lungs. In other words, the muscular power which goes out through the nerves to the muscles and from them to the lungs making them move in a certain manner is also the Prana, which we have to control in the practice of the Pranayama. When the Prana is controlled, all other actions of the Prana in the body will slowly come under control. When we don't have it or the balance of Prana is disturbed what we call disease is produced.

Pranayama is therefore not breathing but at the same time it cannot be said they are not related. The breath is that flywheel supplying and regulating the motive power to everything in this body. We know very little of what is happening inside the body. We can know of them only when the mind becomes more subtle and enters, as it were, deeper into the body. To get the subtle perception, we have to begin with the grosser perceptions. We have to get hold of that which is setting the whole engine in motion. That is the Prana, the most obvious manifestation of which is the breath. Then along with the breath we shall slowly enter the body; which will enable us to find out about the subtle forces, the nerve currents that are moving all over the body. As soon as we perceive them and learn to feel them we shall begin to get control over them and over the body. The mind is also set in motion by these different nerve currents so at last we shall reach that state of perfect control over the body and the mind, when both of them become our servants. The aim, the end and the goal of all these training is the liberation of the soul.

The reason why breathing is practised is to breathe uniformly and from such rhythmical breathing develops a tendency of all molecules in the body to move in the same direction. Consequently, when the mind changes at will, nerve currents also change into a motion 'something like' electricity. When all the motions of the body have become perfectly rhythmical, the body, as it were, becomes a gigantic battery of will. This tremendous will is what exactly the Yogi wants, to attain the fruition of Yoga. It tends to bring a rhythmic action in the body, and helps him through the respiratory centre to control the other centres.

It may be construed that the aim of Pranayama here is to rouse the coiled-up power called Kundalini in the muladhara — the base of the spinal column. If one can make the current pass upwards through the sushumna, the canal in the middle of the spinal column, to the sahasrara, then he has solved the problem. 'The mind has made this net-work of the nervous system and has to break it, so that no wires will be required to work through. Then alone, will all knowledge come to us, no more bondage of body; that is why it is so important that we should get control of that sushumna'. This sushumna is in ordinary persons closed at the lower extremity, no action comes through it. The yogi proposes a practice by which it can be worked and the nerve current made to travel through. Thus the rousing of Kundalini which is the province of Pranayama is the one and only way for attaining Divine Wisdom. And it has been said that the mind whose dross has been cleared away by Pranayama becomes fixed in Brahma and therefore Pranayama has been enjoined.

THE POWER OF THE DIVINE WORD

(in Language-Study as Sadhana)

SISTER SAVITRI

The great world religions, though differing in their paths and means for the attainment of the ultimate goal of life, emphasize however uniformly the Power of the Divine Word. The fourth Gospel of the Christians, for instance, starts thus: 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' In the Hebrew Scriptures the Word of God is likewise conceived of having creative power. In the Genesis God says: 'Let there be Light, and there was Light.' In the Veda again it is said: 'In the beginning was Brahman, with Him was the Word as second. And the Word is Brahman.' In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad this idea is developed further: 'By that Vāk and that Ātman He created all things whatsoever, the Vedas, Metres, Sacrifices and all Creatures.'

Whereas in the first-mentioned religions the Power of the Divine Word and its effect is merely put as a statement, it is in India that we find a very ancient science as basis of this statement — the Mantra Shāstras containing a very detailed description of the Sound and its Power developed from its primordial Cause. This all-encompassing subject of the Power of the Divine Word is certainly of greatest importance for all Sādhanā and most fascinating. Those who are interested to study it in detail, will find a very clear survey of it in Sir John Woodroffe's book *Garland of Letters*. Here I can give only a few fundamental points of it, as far as it is necessary for our own problem — in which different ways this Power of the Divine Word can be of help to us in our Sādhanā.

Many of those who have practised Sadhana for a longer period of time, will have noticed that it can become rather difficult to keep the mind one-pointedly concentrated on their Chosen Ideal. The mind wants by nature variety; therefore, sooner or later, the moment may come when it either starts to run away in all directions or it will become dull. To bring it back by force is a somehow doubtful expedient, and only a very few sadhakas will succeed in it, for already Bhagavan Krishna says in the Gita regarding the mind: 'It is as obstinate as a horse', and consequently compulsion will produce often just the opposite of the desired result namely, an increase of obstinacy. So, what is to be done?

We have to find ways and means to satisfy the mind's desire for variety, so that it remains by itself at the feet of God. For the solution of this problem we find a very helpful suggestion in one of Sri Ramakrishna's talks with Doctor Sarkar under whose treatment he was at that time due to a very painful cancer in the throat.

> Sri Ramakrishna: 'Please cure my illness. I cannot chant the Names and Glories of God.'
> Dr. Sarkar: 'Meditation is enough.'
> Sri Ramakrishna: 'What do you mean! Why should I get monotonous! I eat my fish in various dishes: curried fish, fried fish, pickled fish, and so forth! Sometimes I worship God with rituals, sometimes I repeat His Name, sometimes I meditate on Him, sometimes I sing His Names and Glories, sometimes I dance taking His Name.'

If we follow these words of Sri Ramakrishna trying to practise sadhana in as many different forms as we can think of, then the mind will get its desired variety and will much easily, quite by itself, remain at the feet of God. With this in view I want to suggest one more form of sadhana; out of my own experience, and that is the study of certain languages under certain conditions. But as this kind of language-study is also based on the Power of the Divine Word, I have at first to bring a few more fundamental points from the Mantra Shastras.

The Sanskrit word 'vāk', derived from the root 'vāch' to speak, means word, and this Vak is the Sakti of Brahman, His dynamic Power and inseperable from Him. She manifests Herself in each and everything that exists — creating, maintaining and destroying. In Her gross aspect, 'Vaikhari Vak', She takes the form of the spoken letters.

Of these letters of the Sanskrit alphabet it is said in the Tantra Tattva (II. 45):

> 'The string of fifty letters from A to Ksha, which are the Matrikas, is Eternal, unbeginning and unending and Brahman Itself.'

It is these letters of which, single or in certain combinations, Mantras are constituted, which contain a special manifestation of Her Power, though Vaikhari Sakti is in every sound. We have to understand this in the same way as Sri Ramakrishna gave explanation regarding Incarnations, saying: 'No doubt, God is in everything; but the greatest manifestation of His Power is through an Incarnation.'

In the *Garland of Letters* we find a further explanation:

> 'An ordinary collection of words is something gross. These as all else are forms of Sakti. But the Mantra is the Devata Himself or Herself in Mantra-body. Mantra is thus a mass of radiant energy.' (p. 259).

And further on Sir John Woodroffe says:

> 'In the case of Puja, Dhyana, and other Sadhanas, it is only the Sadhaka's Sadhana-Sakti which operates, whilst in the case of Mantra-Sadhana,

> Sadhana-Sakti works in conjunction with *Mantra-Sakti* which is all-powerful and re-inforces Sadhana-Sakti which is imperfect and meets with obstacles. It is because Mantra possesses this wonderful power that a Jiva can, it is said, accomplish that which appears impossible.' (p. 263).

That the inherent Power of the Names of God can be made manifest by Japa is a well-known fact based on innumerable experiences since thousands of years in India. Of course, the Sakti or latent Power of the Mantra must first be awakened by knowing its meaning, that is, the object for which the Mantra is a symbol, and by knowing its proper intonation, i.e., sound and rhythm. It is therefore self-understood that Mantras cannot be translated. Not even the meaning can be rendered to in its full extent in any translation, not to speak of the sound and rhythm. And this fact does not only apply to the Language but also to the proper script of this language. There comes a moment, after having studied Sanskrit for some time, when any Sanskrit-word seen in Roman transcription, seems to have changed its whole character to such an extent that it simply looks grotesque and unbearable. I think there is no doubt, at least among serious sadhakas in East and West, that the study of Sanskrit is of highest importance for every person who aspires a thorough understanding of the Holy Scriptures of India. This study of Sanskrit is certainly not merely a common language-study. For Sanskrit is surcharged with Divine Power for, as it is said of its string of letters in the above mentioned Tantra Tattva, 'It is unbeginning and unending and Brahman Itself.' Therefore the study of Sanskrit, done in the proper attitude of mind, is certainly a form of Sadhana, and I can only tell out of my own experience that I felt it to be a form of meditation.

Now let us go one step further and see, what result we may attain if we apply the abovementioned facts to the words of Incarnations in general, and in our special case, to those of Sri Ramakrishna. An Incarnation — as generally agreed upon — is God Himself who now and then manifests Himself in a human body for the benefit of humanity. There have been recorded in the different religions many miraculous effects of their Divine Power produced by their sight, touch and word. As they are God Himself, there cannot be any difference between the Power of the Word of God, as quoted in the beginning, and the Power of the words of an Incarnation. Consequently by studying the Words of an Incarnation in His own language, specially, if He is our Ishtadevata, our Chosen Ideal, we certainly shall come thereby into contact with a very strong current of Divine Power. And this again will have the same effect on our Sadhana as Mantra-Sakti, i.e., this Divine Power accumulated in the Words of an Incarnation will reinforce our own Sadhana-Sakti and help us to overcome all obstacles on our path. In addition to this I can tell from my own experience that there is a world of difference between reading Sri Ramakrishna's talks with his disciples in English translation and reading them in his own language. Primarily, as in the case of Sanskrit, there are always subtle shades of the meaning which we can only grasp in the original language, but which cannot be properly rendered in a translation. Next, the very idea of reading or listening to *His Own Words* is simply overwhelming. And even though we cannot hear the sound of Sri Ramakrishna's voice, we can however hear and learn that of his mother-tongue — Bengali — which is very soft and melodious, and which confers to us at least the sound of his mother-tongue in general. Bengali is — so to say — a daughter of Sanskrit, derived from it and containing many Sanskrit words, though in course of time it has developed its own characteristic features and has become an independent highly literary language. But all the same, it kept its charming simplicity of expression which scarcely can be rendered in any translation. That is why the original of the Gospel reveals so much more to us of Sri Ramakrishna's Personality — of his Divine and human nature, of his continuous gliding from one of these states into the other, of his permanently being at the threshold between Nitya and Leela, between the Absolute and Its

Sport, and finally of his unfathomable Love and bewitching charm, that in course of time one cannot help feeling that His Words contain indeed His Living Presence till to-day. By means of all this the obstinate mind gets enough variety to remain absorbed in His wonderful Personality. And who knows, listening intently to His Own Words and having thereby continuously the benefit of their powerful influence, we may even once be granted by His Grace to hear Sri Ramakrishna's own 'sweet voice'.

BUDDHISM IN BURMA

BRAHMACHARI SARADA CHAITANYA

Burma is one of the three Theravada countries of the world, other two being Ceylon and Thailand. In Burma religion is still a living force. From birth to death a Burman's life is regulated by the precepts of Buddha. In Asia the impact of western civilisation has shaken the faith of many an educated soul from the time-old social and religious practices of their own. There is a tendency in many who have come under the influence of glittering western civilisation to demonstrate ultra-modernism in their taste, dress and manner. But in this respect, I think, Burma is an exception. No outside influence could rob a Burman of his faith in Phaya, the Buddha, and His Dhamma. However modern, a Burman will never feel ashamed to don the robe as he is enjoined by his religion and go out begging in sun and shower. And that too he will do, not for the fear of any social sanction but from a spontaneous response from within. This shows that the religion in Burma is still living and living with honour. That the religion in Burma is a living force will be evident from the fact that thousands and thousands of Pagodas throughout the country are well maintained and well cared for; that innumerable number of monks are looked after by the society with love, honour and reverence; that the state being secular in nature could find scope to build an artificial cave at Kaba Aye, near Rangoon, in commemoration of the Sixth Buddhist Council held in 1954 at a cost of nine million Kyats (Indian Rupees). This they claim to be a wonder of the world. And all these have been possible only because the religion of the country is still in a dynamic state and the people take active interest in matters of religion.

How Buddhism came to Burma and who was instrumental in bringing the message of Buddha to this land of Suvannabhumi, as it was known in ancient times, is still in the womb of mystery. However, there are many opinions, both hearsay and historical, current about the introduction of Buddhism in Burma. In the opinion of Pannasami, the monk author of Sasanavamsa, Buddha himself came to Sudhammapura, the modern Thaton, in the eighth year after he had gained the highest wisdom, with many hundred monks. This view of Pannasami has no historical support behind it. And the students of Burmese history consider his view as wishful thinking of an orthodox follower of the Great One.

The second view regarding the introduction of Buddhism in Burma is Asoka Mission. It is said and mentioned in the Kalyani inscription of Pegu that after the third council at Pataliputra a Mission was sent to Burma for the propagation of Buddhism by Moggaliputta Mahathera, the teacher of Asoka and the convener of third council. Thera Sona and Uttara were the twin members of this Mission. Apart from Kalyani inscription we find a mention of this Asoka Mission in Sasanavamsa too. According to Sasanavamsa 'Elder Sona and Uttara came to Burma 235 years after the Blessed One had attained parinibbana'. True we find a mention of this Asoka Mission in the Kalyani inscription which is considered to be a source material of Burmese history; but it is not universally accepted as authentic for in the Rock Edicts of Asoka there is no mention of this so-called Mission. But some are of opinion that there is no reason why one should totally disbelieve Sona and Uttara Mission. Even if we consider this to be legendary we cannot but give some credit to it. Because behind every legend there lurks a shadow of truth. Anyway, it is yet to be ascertained how and when Buddhism really made its way into Burma. And it is also sure that unless any archaeological evidence brings in new light, this will ever remain to be a puzzle for the students of Burmese history. However, the information we get from the archaeological objects dug out from the ruins of Prome, Pegu and Thaton it is clear that Buddhism became well established in these regions of Lower Burma during 5th century A.D. And it is also clear the message of Buddha, which subsequently flooded the whole of Burma, first came from Krishna-Godavari regions of Southern India.

Inhabitants of Prome, Pegu and Thaton were mostly Mons. Even to-day Mons are majority in these regions. And a move is afoot to form a separate Mon state within the Union of Burma. These Mons believe that they came to Burma from Krishna-Godavari region of India. They have a good number of lullabys where it is said: we come from the land of Krishna and Godavari. Since Mons were the first to accept Buddhism in Burma and since they count their descent from Southern India it is most probable that Buddhism was carried to Burma by the Mon immigrants who either for trade or for some other reasons might have migrated to these cities of Lower Burma.

Though Buddhism became well established in Lower Burma by 5th century A.D., as a religion Brahminism was first to come over here. And in all probability it too made its appearance through the same channel. Before the onslaught of Buddhism, Brahminism could not stand. It had to give way to its 'rebel child'. But a study of Buddhism in Burma as it stands to-day will reveal beyond doubt that Buddhism too in its turn could not help but making some concession to its mother religion — the Brahminism — before it could win over the people of Lower Burma. For even to-day Brahminical Gods such as Saraswati, Lakṣhmi and Ganapati command respect from the followers of Buddha in Burma. After the water festival in April, five Gods and Goddesses are worshipped with offerings etc. at Moulmein and Martaban regions. These are Vinayaka, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Mindra Devi and Chandi Devi. Out of these five I could not identify Mindra Devi. But the rest are well known Brahminical deities. Mindra Devi too, I believe, is a Brahminical Goddess and could be identified if a probe is made into it.

But the process of switching over from Brahminism to Buddhism was not always very smooth. There is evidence of occasional encounter between the followers of these two religions. Such a story has been narrated in the *Outline of Burmese History* by Mr. Harvey. In that story it has been shown how king Tissa of Pegu was converted to Buddhism after such an encounter. The story goes like this: Tissa 'was a heretic king' and 'made no obeisance to Buddha, to the Law he hearkened not, he honoured the Brahmanas. He threw down the images of Buddha, he cast them away into ditches and marshes'. One day Bhadra Devi, the maiden daughter of a merchant while taking bath in a pond perchance came across a statue of Buddha from under the water. She cleansed the image and installed it in a Pagoda. In no time the news reached the ears of the king. He sent for the girl and the girl appeared before the king. The king angrily ordered: 'Take her to the elephants that they may trample her to death'. She was taken to the elephants. But 'the elephants dared not tread on her'. Many elephants were engaged for this purpose but none dared to approach the girl who was constantly uttering the name of the Lord — the Buddha. Next she was put to fire. That too failed. For even the fire would not burn her. When all such attempts to kill her proved futile she was taken back to the king. And the king told her : 'If from the image of thy teacher (Buddha) there fly not up seven images, eight images, I will have thee cut into seven pieces.' The girl prayed to Buddha and eight images flew up into heaven to the astonishment of all. Now the girl in her turn asked the king if he could demonstrate such a thing with his God. The king proudly tried but could not. So in shame he banished all the false Gods he was so long worshipping and took refuge in Buddha. This story is a clear indication that an encounter was going on between Buddhism and Brahminism before the former could win over the people of Lower Burma to its side.

When Lower Burma or Mon countries were passing through such a revolution of great importance, Upper Burma remained contented with her Nats and Baby Nats — the ancestral spirits — and could know little of what was going on in her neighbouring zones. But the brilliant rays of Dhamma did not allow her to remain so for long. Shin Arahan, a monk from Ramanna, fired with the zeal of a true missionary went to Pagan and converted Anawrahta — the king — into Buddhism. It was eleventh century A.D. Anawrahta's conversion into Buddhism marks the ushering in of a new era — an era which brought into its train new hopes and aspirations for the people of Upper Burma. So long they were satisfied with their ancestral spirits but now they got a true perspective of a true religion. With Anawrahta came whole of Upper Burma within the fold of Buddhism. True the people of Upper Burma accepted Buddha and His Dhamma, but they could not give up the worship of Nats altogether. Buddhism had to step down and give sanction to the worship of Nats for that was the easiest way to get new converts into its fold. Even today in many houses, what to speak of in community worships, Nats are worshipped side by side with the Great One. Even from the State Nats are propitiated every year. But one thing should be noted, Burmans may worship Nats but in no consideration will they place them before Buddha. Buddha reigns supreme in their life. In the words of Mr Pratt, author of *India and Its Faith*, the Burman loves the Buddha but fears the Nats. The Buddha he knows will never harm him, but the Nats may !

With the conversion of Anawrahta into Buddhism different ethnic groups of Burma became united under the banner of Lord Buddha. And the message of Dhamma opened a new vista of life to the people at large. Buddhism — the most civilising factor of the day—not only gave to the inhabitants of Burma 'one of the purest faiths mankind has ever known', but also initiated her into the realm of 'world culture and civilization'. In the words of Dr Niharranjan Roy :

> To-day all that is beautiful and attractive in Burmese life and society and manners and customs come in fact from Buddhism. The religion gave them deeper thoughts to contemplate upon, higher principles to live for and nobler ideals to aspire after. It gave them a new outlook on life, and influenced the notions and beliefs of the average Burman to a considerable extent.
>
> (*Theravada Buddhism in Burma*, page 264).

Truly speaking, today's Burma is a gift of Buddhism ; is a creation of Buddhism. It is undeniable. It is irrefutable. Glory be unto Buddha, Glory be unto Dhamma, Glory be unto Sangha.

Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer ?
Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry ?

—THE BUDDHA

MATERIALIST PHILOSOPHY

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Life is just attraction and repulsion says the materialist as ironically described in one of the greatest of the scriptures of the world, the Bhagavad Gita. Like quick-lime on which water is poured, like potassium or sodium burning in water and splitting it, all life is a phenomenon of attraction and repulsion of matter, and there is nothing beyond the material, although sometimes something looks wonderful and different from matter. This is the materialist's position.

As a matter of fact this identification of material with spiritual phenomena, is no detraction of the spiritualist position. The materialist and his ally the scientist constantly seek to prove that spirit is matter. But on the other side there is a chuckle. Because if spirit is proved to be matter, the proof that matter is spirit is also progressing simultaneously. Those who believe in God and spirituality do not distinguish and isolate the material from the spiritual world. God, they believe, is in the material atom. It is God, they assert, that holds matter together and divides it sometimes. Water, light, sound, all these and other things, atoms, waves and quantums, are as spiritual and dependent on the universal almighty Power as the things of spirit, so distinguished and recognised. The Rishis looked on the water drops and the ever-moving air as manifestations of God and offered humble worship to every form and manifestation of that Power including tangible things. In their view the wonderful results of experiments and successful explorations into the laws of matter are all hymns to the Spirit that governs the universe. Thomas Henry Huxley, famous agnostic, when charged with being a materialist said in answer :

> 'Legitimate materialism, the extension of the conceptions and of the methods of physical science to the highest as well as the lowest phenomena of vitality, is neither more nor less than a sort of shorthand (reverse) idealism.'

A candle burning and the sun shining, a Sankaracharya's thoughts and a computer that adds up at a shop-counter, are all manifestations of the same Power and the same Law. The victories of science are victories for religion if we understand Huxley's paradox quoted above.

The old stupid attacks on icon-worship and on pantheism were based on a misconception of the faith of the prophets and the Rishis. The Satan complex of Semitic faiths is at the bottom of the objection to icons. It is believed that the icon competes with God as Satan did. Even if the objection be that images distract the attention of the devotee, it is groundless. Every holy symbol helps. Not a blade of grass nor an atom of hydrogen but is a manifestation of God. Put Bhakti and vision into it, and it becomes a *lingam* for worship of the Almighty. If God is immanent in all things, why should we not offer worship with an icon before us ? The daily Sandhya of the Hindus includes the sprinkling of water on one's head and a prayer in which worship is offered to the drops of water and reverent tributes are paid to this liquid manifestation of God. If there is no God but matter and you make it omnipotent, that is exactly what the pious man says, though in reverse form. It is not a detraction or denial but an odd way of enunciating the religious faith about the immanence of God if the scientists put infinite power into the material atom. An automatic machine is a wonderful thing, but it does not reduce or negative the wonder of the laws of nature that make and uphold the machine's work. And so also if the laws of nature are wonderful, they do not reduce but enhance the wonder of the great Law behind those laws, to which we give the name of God. Matter is wonderful, and beholding that wonder, the believers believe.

CAN A CHRISTIAN REMAIN INDIAN ?

MARK SUNDER RAO

The title was suggested by a discourse on 'Can India Become Christian ?' The speaker, as could be imagined, was equivocal : Yes, he said, if certain conditions obtained ; No, he said, if certain other conditions prevailed. In the end what he said was neither here nor there.

Be that as it may, there is no question, it seems to me, about India becoming Christian until the prior question can be affirmatively answered : the question at the head of this article.

This question cries for an answer because it is conceded on all sides that though the religion of Jesus was of Asiatic origin, when in the last two centuries and a half it was presented to the Indian people it wore a European garb ; inevitably so. The resulting community was a conglomeration of co-existing denominations, true in most respects to their prototypes in the West.

Indeed, such was the zeal, even of Indian nationals who turned Christians, to maintain the Western forms, that a new adherent to Christian Faith was left with these alternatives : to sleep in the denominational procrustean bed and get mutilated or to remain a lone-wolf in his track, suspected of heresy. In certain cases it meant that unwillingness to adopt the denominational tyranny drove an individual right out of the Christian fold, back into his original community, in a state worse than his first.

This state of things has not always gone without being questioned. Some prophetic voices rang out demanding a complete change in outlook and practice. Among such was a group of Christians from several parts of the then Indian Empire who met in Serampore and on December 25, 1905 founded the National Missionary Society. Apart from its foundation belief that the Christian work should be done with Indian men and money in India, it proclaimed that it should evolve and adopt *indigenous* methods of communication.

How far this Society has gone in exploring *Indian* methods of practice of faith and its expression and is using them still remains a moot point. But this is not the theme of the article. We want to ask the question : If Indian Christians do want to adopt indigenous methods of thought and practice, what should they do ?

In the first instance, they would have to study the history of the different faiths in India, how they arose, how they spread, how they decayed or how they yet survive. This study is basic.

As a next step, it might be asked : What forms of faith and practice have today survived in India and to what dynamic do they owe such survival ? Having found the secret of such survival of Hindu faith, it ought to be possible for one to try and find out whether that genius can back Christian effort — in this country.

It seems to me, upon nearly three decades of study both of Christianity and of the Hindu systems, that, at one point there seems to be a possibility of give-and-take relationship. To confine ourselves to the point of this article, let us ask what are the fundamental modes of thought and practice that Christians in India cannot afford to ignore, if (i) they are to evolve an indigenous expression of their faith, and (ii) to survive as a dynamic force in the country.

The Vedanta and the Yoga are India's major contributions to the spiritual riches of the world. There are, of course, different schools of the Vedanta, as there are countless systems of Yoga. The latter will always remain a preserve of this country. But what is intended is a way of approaching Reality, God and how the nature of such Reality, God, is conceived. *This* matters more than the distinctions among different schools of thought.

I submit, therefore, that those Indian Christians who wish to remain *Indian* have but to address themselves to the task of understanding the genius of Indian Vedanta and Yoga. It is implied, as a matter of course, that the present author holds that there can be Indian *Christian* Vedanta and Yoga.

A Christian can remain an Indian to the extent he succeeds in being a Christian Vedantin and Yogin.

चरैवेति

SHIP'S CAPTAIN

Imagine a combination as follows : a wise man who reveals only as much as those around him can really grasp, an attendant who is not philosophically inclined, is therefore shut out from his master's philosophical discussions and can record only what he has heard or thinks he has known, and a historian who has his own manner and difficulties of presentation. Apollonius, Damis, and Philostratus constitute precisely such a combination,—a 'triple filter', as Dr Schnur calls it. We can be thankful that much valuable information has managed to pass through it and come down to us! We shall refer only to very few items from it.

The first one, chosen by Dr Schnur himself, is connected with 'transmigration of souls'. It is said that Apollonius was able to remember his previous 'incarnations'. In one he had been the captain of a ship. He had then behaved in a peculiar way. Phoenician pirates who intercepted his ship had made 'an offer' to him in return for letting the cargo and crew into their hands without the ordeal of a fight. Apollonius (rather, he who later incarnated as Apollonius) had then pretended to assent, having clearly visualized the consequences of an outright refusal. This had the result of throwing the enemies off their guard. He himself had remained alert, and when night fell, giving him an excellent cover, had slipped out, thereby saving both cargo and crew. According to Apollonius in his Nepal visit frame of mind, his conduct should have been different. For by the way he had acted, he had only abstained from wrong doing. It was not the same thing as 'doing justice'.

Dr Schnur explains the inner meaning of this 'dream-memory'. The ship, he says, is the Egyptian symbol of the soul,—exposed to danger and temptation. During these first forty-eight years of his life, had he, the 'pilot', put up active resistance to the evil around him? 'True, he had preached wisdom and virtue, but had consistently abstained from participation in politics; he had preferred the seclusion of temple groves to the admitted danger of the political arena.' One important result of the discussions on the 'cloud-girt mountain in Nepal' was to inspire him to 'determined opposition to the tyrannies of Nero and Domitian.'

* * *

To students of Indian lore, the idea of a philosopher functioning as a king, an administrator, or a commander in a field of battle will not appear strange at all. The names of Janaka, Rama, Krishna, Bhishma and many others who combined the highest spiritual illumination with the greatest efficiency as rulers and military men, dedicating their virtues for the 'welfare of all' will easily rush into their minds. It may be profitable to study what Samkara has to say while commenting on the *Gita* passage (III. 20) which declares : 'By action only, indeed, did Janaka and others try to attain perfection. Even with a view to the protection of the masses thou shouldst perform (action).' Says the Āchārya : 'The wise Kshatriyas of old, such as Janaka and Asvapati, tried by action alone to attain Moksha (*Sam-siddhi*). If they were persons possessed of right knowledge, then we should understand that, since they had been engaged in works, they tried to reach Moksha with action, *i.e.,* without abandoning works, with a view to setting an example to the world. If, on the other hand, such men as Janaka were persons who had not attained right knowledge, then, (we should understand) they tried to attain Moksha through action which is the means of attaining purity of mind (*Sattva-suddhi*).' Here we have to remember the principle that all disciplines, as a matter of fact, lead only to mental purity. Human effort ends there. What happens to the pure mind is that Truth flashes into it *of Its own accord.* Truth is not a fruit pulled down with the aid of limited human mental exertions.

In the case of people of the right temperament, therefore, political activities can in the beginning become a means for mental purity (and illumination), while in the case of those already illumined, those same activities can be open channels for expressing their wisdom,—God's grace, in religious terms—for the welfare of all. There need not and should not, be any sense of contradiction between the attitudes adopted in temple groves and in day-to-day work done in a spirit of 'dedicated service'.

भग चरैवेति ।

SUBANDHU

We express again our indebtedness to Dr Schnur for the facts about Apollonius.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Budhananda of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, is a former Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari.*

Sri R. K. Murti is from Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore.

Dr P. Nagaraja Rao is Professor of Philosophy, Karnatak College, Dharwar.

Swami Ritajananda is from Vedanta Society, Hollywood.

Sri T. S. Raghavan is from Madras.

Sister Savitri is a German devotee and Linguist.

Brahmachari Sarada Chaitanya is from the Ramakrishna Mission, Burma.

Sri C. Rajagopalachariar is one of the few national leaders who are anxious to uphold the fundamental values of life. We are glad that, in spite of heavy pressure of work at his age, he could give here one of his ideas harmonizing the materialistic and spiritual views.

Sri Mark Sunder Rao's main interest is indigenous expression of Christianity. He is currently general secretary of the National Missionary Society of India. He was associated with the late Mr P. Chenchiah, and with others who believe in the great contribution of India to the spiritual wealth of the world.

INDIAN UNITY AND SANSKRIT

In recent days so many centrifugal forces are at work that leaders of India naturally feel concerned about the unity of India. Various agencies are being geared to this purpose. Sriman Narayan, Member, Planning Commission, recognizes this as 'the greatest problem' and speaks about the efforts made by the Commission. While writing on 'Planning for India's unity', he says :

> 'But the greatest problem that confronts us today is the problem of achieving emotional and cultural unity of our people without which mere

economic planning will be more or less futile. Our national leadership was eminently successful in bringing about the integration of more than 600 states within the Indian Union soon after the achievement of independence. But the work of reorganising different States on a linguistic basis has created a number of problems which require concerted efforts for their satisfactory solution.'

'The Planning Commission and the Ministry of Education have already started preliminary studies for evolving a comprehensive programme for strengthening the forces of national unity through education and cultural activities during the Third Plan period. Unless we tackle this problem in a planned manner in addition to various developmental activities within the country, it will be very difficult to put through a Plan of Rs. 10,200 crores during the next five years. It must be realised by all of us that planning for national unity and cohesion is as important, if not more, as planning for economic development of the country. Recent language riots in Assam should serve as a danger signal to the country and should be utilised for forging closer cultural and emotional ties between different States of the Indian Union in the larger background of our common national heritage.

(*Free India*, Nov. 27, '60.)

For the development of this 'national unity and cohesion' the importance of Sanskrit has been shown by Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Chairman, West Bengal Legislative Council and formerly Chairman, Sanskrit Commission. For the freshness of approach and persuasiveness of the plea we may notice a few of the passages from his article on 'Indianism and Sanskrit' in *Indo-Asian Culture* (July, 60), which is the text of an address by him delivered at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

'Although the history and the conditions have been partly dissimilar in China and in India, yet we find one great thing: the Unity of China as a single country, culturally and politically, has been maintained primarily through the Chinese System of Writing, as much by the Classical Literature of China, but chiefly by the former; while the cultural, and following that the political Unity of India has been made possible only through the great fact of Sanskrit (leaving aside extraneous binding forces like the rule of the British, or in earlier days, of some dominant section of the people acting like a military Herrenvolk).'

'Just as from the later forms of the Old Indo-Aryan speech or Vedic Sanskrit of 1000 B.C. have descended all the various Middle Indo-Aryan speeches, or Prakrits, of about 500 A.D. and from these Middle Indo-Aryan speeches have issued all the various Modern or New Indo-Aryan Languages, or Bhashas, like Bengali, Oriya, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Kosali, Hindi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Hindki, Sindhi, Himalayan with Gorkhali etc., so also, in the same way, the various Modern Chinese Languages have come out from a single Ancient Chinese of nearly 3000 years ago.'

'There have been suggestions to do away with this peculiar state of things in China, and to introduce a system of writing which would give the actual pronunciation of the word. But no practical attempt could have any meaning in this matter for the whole of China. If such an attempt were sought to be implemented, then the unity of China in the matter of language, which is maintained by the script, will have to be abandoned. The Chinese-speaking areas would at once split up into a number of independent language-areas, where the different spoken languages, with their pronunciations written in a phonetic script, and with their new developments in word-formation and grammar, would cut themselves away from each other; and there will no longer be the bond afforded by the written script, cumbrous though it is.'

'Thus in China, they have virtually reconciled themselves to the position that a few years of heart-rending labour must be the lot of the Chinese boys and girls in acquiring one to two thousand characters of their language as the most obvious, the most potent and practically the indispensable expression and symbol of Chinese Unity in matters both cultural and political.

'What is done by the Chinese Script for China is being done by the Sanskrit language for India. This is the force which we see to a large extent no doubt, but which also moves in a way unseen of many, in maintaining the Unity of India. For this reason, Sanskrit must be retained, even at considerable sacrifice of time and labour; nay, even at all cost, as an essential thing in our Indian life, in our Indian culture, and in our Indian education.'

Dr Chatterjee also cites the efforts of reviving Hebrew in Israel 'just to strengthen the religious, cultural and political basis of their very existence as a nation' and Irish in Eire 'just to preserve the Irish Name and the Irish Nationality as well as the Irish Way of Life'. If Indian unity is our prime concern and if we are ready to spend enough money for it, why should we not spend for Sanskrit and take advantage of its services? For Sanskrit has been a potent factor down the ages for fostering cultural unity in India even in days when there was no political unity. But the effort should not be to make Sanskrit isolated. It must be integrated with general education to be a real unifying force having its liberalizing influence upon all the people from their early days.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

YOGA PSYCHOLOGY: By Swami Abhedananda. Pp. 403. Price Rs. 10. Ramakrishna Vedanta Mutt, 19/B, Raja Rajakrishna Street, Calcutta-6.

This is a most fascinating study of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and it grew out of the lectures on the subject, delivered by Swami Abhedananda, to an American audience in 1920. The lectures have been edited with copious reference not only to the text, but to the commentaries of Vyasa and Vachaspati Misra. Thereby a long neglected treasure, such as the Maharishi's work was, has been resuscitated, and a keenly felt need fulfilled.

In Viveka Chudamani, V. 12 & 13, Acharya Sankara points out that sacred baths, charity, and hundreds of pranayams, cannot be a substitute for 'Vichara', through which alone could one obtain the knowledge of the Self. The Bhagavadpada's reference to the Yoga-Sutras, though oblique, is obvious. Indeed, as the eminent author rightly observes (p. viii), Yogins have been classified by him as dualists, along with the Sankhyas. These lectures, however, could be justly claimed to have dispelled altogether any such impression. Because their sum and substance might well be summed up thus, as the author has done at P. 257. 'The true Self' he says, 'can be realised through concentration. Through regular practice, we should study our own mind, and through breathing exercises, we should control all the lower emotions and lower tendencies. Through concentration and meditation, we should remove all the pain-bearing obstructions. Gradually, we shall gain a glimpse of our true self and understand the relationship with the Infinite, realising that we are birthless and deathless. The attainment of this permanent blissful state is the aim of Yoga Psychology'.

Yoga Psychology is not sectarian but affords the fundamental ideas that underly all religions and philosophies' (P. 383).

It maintains that the sense of limitation is removed by the recognition of the limitless Divine Consciousness and raises man above the level of nescience or maya, conferring on him everlasting bliss and freedom. (P. 403).

It must therefore be said to the credit of this publication that the Yoga Aphorisms have been dealt with in such a manner that one finds little difficulty in regarding them as a *sine qua non* for the study of Vedanta, of Advaita Vedanta too. For in truth, 'Atma Vichara' can be facilitated a great deal by adhering to the rigid discipline chalked out by Patanjali, which has been explained and illustrated with the utmost clarity in the pages of this book. Methods have been set out, which enables one to attain a complete balance of mind, and through the medium of a cultivated and balanced mind, to attain supramental Consciousness.

The lectures have been framed on the model which Swami Vivekananda had employed for broadcasting the essentials of Raja, Karma and Jnana Yogas. The sutras have been reduced to an exact science, and treatment is throughout clear and systematic, enlivened with apt illustrations from everyday science and happenings, and with particular reference to the tenets of Christian theology.

Perhaps the highest tribute which one might be permitted to pay to this book and to its illustrious author is that it is now possible to regard Patanjali's Yoga Aphorism, which had quite unjustifiably been, almost a forgotten chapter in the evolution of Indian Philosophy, as embodying no esoteric doctrine or dogma, but an eminently practical scheme of internal discipline which suits the aspirants of all religious and philosophical schools, to attain the highest in spiritual life and endeavour.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

MEN OF GOD: By T. V. Kapali Sastry. Published by M. P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pages 64. Price Rs. 2.

Amidst the chaotic conditions of social order left by the disintegrating influence of Buddhism and counteracted to some extent by Kulinism in Bengal Society during the 15th Century, the cult of Krishnabhakti played a notable part in the history of Bengal Vaishnavism of which Sri Krishna Chaitanya was the outstanding personality, who became the soul of the cult and his life itself presented concrete ideals. Not until his pilgrimage to Gaya, had this proudest and haughtiest young scholar of Nadia was pronounced a second Sukadev or Prahlad who had seen the Unseen.

The life of Guru Nanak was full of vigour and enthusiasm and his struggle to spread the Supreme Faith is well told.

Guru Govind Singh, who had to undertake the heroic mission of remedying the cruel acts of the oppressive Muslim rulers had to die-hard in establishing the sovereignty of Truth. The narration about the life and adventures of these three men of God is lucid and clear. The book, however, does not contain their philosophic Thought.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

ECONOMIC & INDUSTRIAL LIFE AND RELATIONS: By M. K. Gandhi. Compiled and edited by Shri V. B. Kher. Vol. I. P. 202. Rs. 3.50. Vol. II. P. 379. Rs. 4.00. Vol. III. P. 269. Rs. 3.00. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.

These three volumes bring out the views of Mahatma Gandhi, on industrial and labour relations as well as on the socio-economic problems, which still await solution in our country. As a world teacher, or as accurately styled, a 'Yuga Purusha' his writings, speeches and even conversations have an eternal value, and this is more so because whatever he said he had practised himself. And going through this veritable encyclopaedia, one is brought face to face with the personality of the great teacher and theorist and of the principles for which he stood. In most respects his views have been refreshingly original and perhaps the best tribute to this collection is that the world today is enabled to know that his doctrines were no copy book maxims but were eminently practical and pragmatic, which had as its sole objective, the happiness and well being of the masses of the country.

His pattern of Swadeshi did not rest on ill-will. A more worldly wise caution was not uttered when he pleaded that 'to reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's own country, of manufactures for which it is not suited, would be criminal folly!' 'I buy' he says, 'useful literature from everywhere, surgical instruments from England, pens and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland, but not an inch of cotton fabric from England or Japan.' (II.83)

His attitude towards machinery was equally rational. He was not opposed to any contrivance which does not deprive the masses of the opportunity to labour, which helps and adds to his efficiency, and which he can handle at will without being its slave (e.g. the Singer Sewing Machine).

He was naturally drawn towards the Charka as our 'Kamadhenu', whose extinction had brought on 'slavery, pauperism and the disappearance of the our artistic talent, which was the envy of the world'. None can demur to his castigation of the Spinning Mills which are 'frankly money making and will not regulate prices'. (II. 260.)

He had expressed himself against strikes in no unmistakable terms. His conditions for a strike were stringent. 'Strikes,' he says, 'are a crime immediately the employer accepts arbitration'. 'Labour in India, is at the mercy of those who are set up as advisers, and the latter are not scrupulous'. 'All public sympathy must be withheld from unjustifiable strikes'.

Regarding the propertied class, his view is that the 'Congress represents the poor: still that does not mean that the other classes, viz. Zamindars and Capitalists should go under'. 'The Zamindar must not be wiped out. The man who supplies brains, is as much a tiller, as the one who labours with his hand' (III. P. 189.), 'I shall be', he says, 'no party to dispossessing propertied classes of their private property without just cause'. (III. Pp. 201.)

His passion for diet reform was boundless.

His attitude towards Englishmen was typical. 'I do not think' he says, 'I can claim a deeper attachment to anyone than to Mr Andrews. We look forward to a day when out of friendship will grow the same close brotherhood between the Englishmen and the Indians in India.'

Gandhiji was essentially a man of religion and ethics. There is, according to him 'no character where there is no patience, truth, gentleness and humility' (II. 176) 'I believe', he declares, 'in Advaita: if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him'. (II. 86.) He sums up: 'God is the hardest task-master I have known in this Earth; He tries you through and through. And when you find that your faith is failing or you are sinking, He comes to your assistance somehow, but on His terms not on your terms'.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

EAST & WEST SERIES: By Sadhu T. L. Vaswani, No. 52, PILGRIMS OF KNOWLEDGE. Pp. 32. Price 0.50 nP. No. 54. PEBBLES ON THE SEA SHORE. Pp. 32. Price 0.50 nP.

The pilgrims of knowledge spreads out the right type of education and what the students should cultivate in order to achieve the right education. Incidentally the author stresses on the value of the three vital truths of silence, guidance from within and sharing with others in the service of love.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

Birthday Celebrations of The Holy Mother

The 108th Birthday Tithipuja of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was observed in the Math on 10th December, 1960. The day started with Mangalarati in the shrine at 5 a.m., followed by devotional songs and chantings of select portions from Gita, Upanishads etc.

Worship in the shrine was started at 8 a.m. and came to a close at 1-30 p.m., after the Homa was performed. About 1,250 devotees and 1,200 Daridranarayanas were served with food prasad. After the evening service in the shrine, selected teachings of the Holy Mother were read and some senior Swamis spoke.

The public function came off on 11th December, the succeeding Sunday. This being a ladies' function, many lady devotees and students of Sarada Vidyalaya, Avvai Home and other institutions assembled at 3-30 p.m. and sang devotional songs in praise of the Mother. The function started with Mrs. S. Ambujammal in the chair. Mrs. A. R. Indira and Mrs. Rajaratnam spoke in Tamil. After the Tamil speech there was music by Mrs. Kanaka Candade. Then after the Bhajan by the students of Queen Mary's College, there were speeches in Hindi, English and Telugu by Mrs. Mandakini Krishnamurthy, Dr. Mrs. Saraswathi Chennakesavan and Kumari Y. Sarojini Devi respectively. The speakers referred to the Holy Mother's unostentatious life of service, self-effacing sacrifice, all absorbing love, ascetic forbearance and immaculate purity and emphasized that humanity in general and women in particular would be immensely benefited by learning to follow in her footsteps.

At the end there was distribution of prizes. The girls winning first prizes in different languages recited their pieces. With the Chair's concluding address and the vote of thanks the function came to a close.

OBITUARY

We are sorry to announce the passing away of Sri P. Manickasamy Mudaliar, B.A., aged 92 at his own residence in Mylapore, in the early morning on Sunday the 4th December 1960.

He retired from the service of the Rangoon Government about three decades ago and was the recipient of a pension to the end of his life. He, at an early age, came under the influence of Srimat Swami Ramakrishnanandaji, the first president of the Ramakrishna Math at Mylapore, Madras. With a sceptical mind full of doubts in the field of religion and an intellect eager for discussion he approached the Swami but soon he succumbed to his pure love and towering intelligence and became his life-long and ardent devotee. He was moving intimately with the members of the Mylapore Math, which he served for many years to the extent of his capacity ; and was also associated with the management of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya at Coimbatore in its initial stages. He was the author of a book in Tamil — Jagat-Jeeva-Para-Vilakka-Vinavidai — based entirely on Swami Ramakrishnananda's 'Man and the Universe'—which did much to popularise the teachings of the Mission. He also translated into Tamil a lecture of Swami Vivekananda. Both the books were published by the Mylapore Math. He was an earnest student of Advaita Vedanta, keen in his practice of meditation and intellectual discussions. He published in Tamil 'Nārada Bhakti Sutras' and several other small booklets also. We offer our sincere condolences to the bereaved members of his family. May his soul rest in peace !

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on January 9, 1961.

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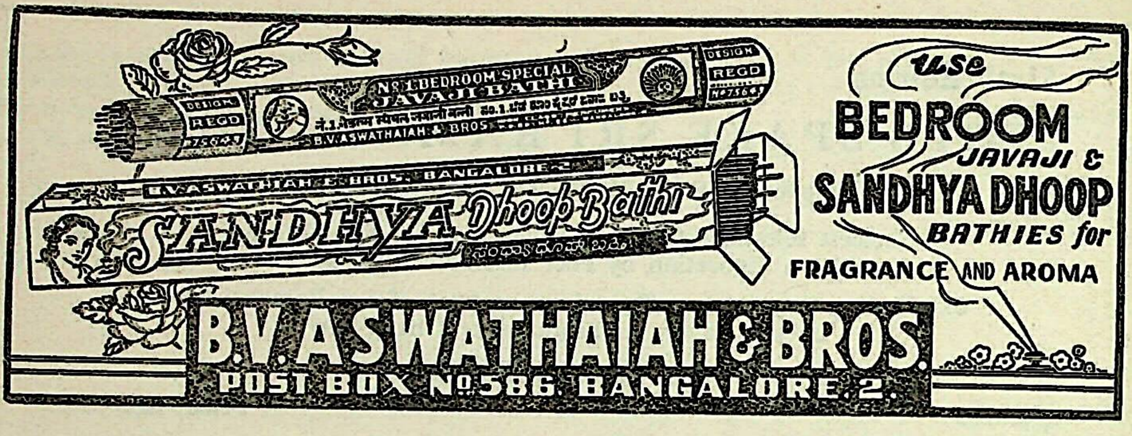

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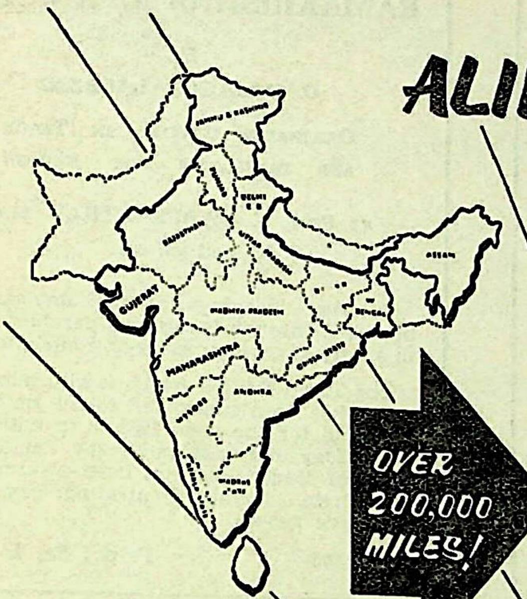
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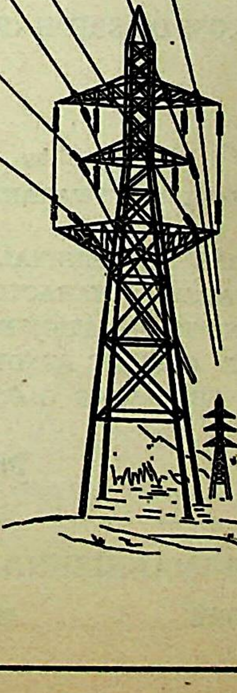

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